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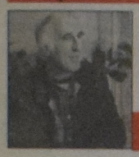

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56th year of publication

The Quebec Summit: democracy in the streets?

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Harry der Nederlanden

QUEBEC CITY — A 3.8 kilometre security perimeter, complete with a three-metre-high chain-link fence is in the process of being erected in Quebec City, and over 5,000 officers are being prepared to defend this space. So many Mounties have been assigned to the job that their regular work has virtually ground to a halt during the month of April. What's the big threat? A resurgence of the FLQ?

Connecting, not separating

No, it's not about separating but about connecting. Starting April 20, the 34 democratically elected heads of state of the Americas and their retinues will gather in Quebec City for the Third Summit of the Americas. Three years of preparations have gone into the three days of meetings, and earlier consultations have involved not just government officials, but international organizations, financial institutions and organizations from civil society. But this summit itself is for government officials only.

GRACE DEUTSCH & AVANTHIA SWAN

Quebec City: What's the big threat?

Of course, corporate bigwigs are invited to rub shoulders with government officials between formal meetings – for a fee. According to the *Globe and Mail*, Scotiabank and Alcan, for example, have shelled out half a million each to sponsor one of the receptions, and this gives them the privilege of hobnobbing with the politicians and bureaucrats. Since the demonstrations against the exclusiveness of such proceedings that erupted into riots in Seattle, Prague and other cities around such globalizing summits, the organizers have made efforts to make the process more inclusive. This, apparently, is one way of opening the meetings up. In exchange for fees ranging from $75,000 to $1,500,000, the representatives of corporations are invited to "networking events" such as coffee breaks, breakfasts and receptions.

Police in riot gear

Many more interested folk – without invitations of any kind – are also converging on Quebec and making elaborate preparations. They will be met with chain-link fences and police in riot gear. Many of these groups and organizations are drilling their members in how to survive a demonstration that has devolved into a riot. Their spokespersons expect most of the violence to come from the police, who have been training in ways to keep demonstrators far away from the big shots.

Some of these groups, according to the RCMP, will be looking for ways to foment violence, as they have done at previous meetings. The violence used to draw attention to their cause, the activists reason, is nothing compared to the violence done to the environment and to the lives of the poor by the global corporations.

The huge majority of the demonstrators and protestors, however, are not in Quebec to cause a riot; they are there to draw attention to the shadow side of globalization. Most of them are young and well-educated, and they are convinced that their future is being planned at these international meetings according to an agenda drawn up by transnational

See **FREE TRADE** *page 2...*

On the farm: despair and prayer

Harry der Nederlanden

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — These are dark, uncertain times for farmers in Canada, with some speaking of the end of the family farm. But they are horrific, even apocalyptic times for farmers in Britain, the Netherlands and France, who sometimes feel as if they are offering entire herds as fiery sacrifices to some vengeful deity. To see this basic calling subject to such strain that suicide is fast becoming an occupational hazard for farmers has convinced many that the times are deeply, sorely out of joint.

Spectre of smoke rising

The spectre of smoke rising from mountains of burning carcases has prompted one Dutch pastor to speak of it as a plague from God, quoting Bishop J. C. Ryle, writing about a similar outbreak of hoof-and-mouth in 1856. In his Jeremiad Ryle describes the plague as the finger of a wise and loving God who is calling the nation to repentance. Another pastor sermonizes about signs of the end-times: "May we call these contagious diseases signs of the end-times?" asks Rev. M.J.C. Blok, a pastor in the Liberated Reformed Churches. "Are they a bill being presented to the Western world by God?" He cites Rev. 18, where woe is cried over Babylon the Great, and the merchants weep and mourn over her because no one buys her cargo any more. The Dutch are indeed in an apocalyptic mood and pastors are calling for prayer and repentance.

Another pastor, B. Nobel, is reluctant to say that God sends plagues to punish people. "But I do think that we have called it upon ourselves by the way we manage our society," she says, and talks about putting economic interests before the welfare of animals. "For years there has been political pressure and subsidies to encourage farming on a bigger scale, to build more barns. But we're bumping into limits...."

Counseling for farmers

In England, where the epidemic began, and where over 600 farms have been stricken and over 600,000 animals condemned to be burnt or buried, special counseling lines have been set up to support despairing farmers. Farmers there had already been ravaged and depressed by mad cow disease, but the hoof and mouth virus has been even more devastating. Many

See **DUTCH** *page 2...*

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Are mad cow disease and hoof and mouth virus signs of the end times?

News

Free trade critics feel excluded from Quebec Summit

... continued from page 1

corporations. Since the end of the so-called Cold War, global capitalism has been the only game in town, and every country in the world is doing its utmost to attract investment. More and more, critics fear, the money-men are calling the tune. Local issues, environmental issues, health issues, and many other human interests, they say, are being put on the back burner.

One of the main agreements that is expected to come out of the meetings is the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), our equivalent to the European Economic Union, though not as far-reaching. It would be much bigger than the North American Free Trade Agreement, creating an umbrella of laws for trade among all 34 participating countries that regulates not just the exchange of products, but investments, agriculture, intellectual property, subsidies and services.

More power for corporations

"The proposed FTAA," warns the Council of Canadians, "would give transnational corporations unequalled new 'rights' to challenge and compete for every publicly funded service now provided by governments — from health care and education to social security, culture and environmental protection. If adopted, it could remove the ability of every government to create or maintain laws and regulations protecting the health, safety and well-being of their citizens and the environment they share.

"Worse, the FTAA would become the model for future world trade agreements, eventually rendering health, environmental and other laws around the world subservient to those of international trade."

Secret negotiations

The fear that government representatives will sign an agreement that gives priority to the ability of transnational corporations to function without interference from local governments and from civil society (that is, non-governmental groups and organizations) is what motivates the demonstrators. They are also incensed by the fact that the negotiations are not public. Trade negotiations have seldom been done in public because they often pass through sensitive stages. None, however, have been as comprehensive and far-reaching, and if permitted to continue in this secretive way, the public will have no idea what is being done on their behalf until the deal is signed, sealed and delivered.

A study of the federal website devoted to the summit, however, shows that the participating governments have been sensitive to the criticisms leveled at the process. (They've had to be; demonstrators in Seattle virtually shut down the WTO.) Yet, to be fair, from the beginning the purpose of the consultations have been concerned with more than economic integration or globalization. Strengthening democracy was on the agenda in both of the earlier summits held in Miami (1994) and in Santiago, Chile (1998). Efforts have also been made to broaden the focus beyond narrowly economic and political ones; a third theme has been added – Realizing Human Potential. It is supposed to address social issues and promises to work toward greater inclusiveness and equity. Non-governmental or so-called civil society agencies have also been invited to give input at various stages of the long process, but they are not part of the negotiations themselves.

This is hardly surprising, because "civil society" is such a vague term. It seems to include any and all forms of human co-operation not part of the government or of the business world. 'What entitles any organization, however, to speak for the interests of the people?' elected officials rightfully ask. Among the critics and demonstrators are radical splinter groups that represent almost no one but themselves. Some presume to speak for the Third World in ways that are rejected by duly elected representatives from those countries. This raises the question, however, why business interests should be allowed such great influence; they, after all, have not been elected either.

A sympathetic policy paper published by the Canadian Foundation for the Americas points out that although the Miami Summit called for ways to consult with civil society organizations and to improve the participation of marginalized groups, and even drafted guidelines, no meaningful mechanism was created to allow for such participation. In short, officials have offered lip service to the idea but have done little to implement it.

Government and corporate conspiracy ?

This has convinced many groups that government officials and corporate interests are conspiring to deliberately exclude them, and that despite the rhetoric about promoting democracy and inclusiveness, they are determined to maintain secrecy.

It is, to be sure, easier to demand democratic participation than to provide for it. The FTAA has provided a 'mailbox" where groups interested in protecting the environment, labor, health and so on were invited to submit their concerns. Open meetings have also been conducted by sub-committees to garner input from experts, academics and civil society organizations. There is deep suspicion among critics, however, that such submissions are easily ignored in the name of overriding economic pressures.

On the other hand, a number of the protesting organizations are not really interested in participating in a democratic process that calls for compromise. They are interested only in discrediting the entire process and in forcing their own agendas. To admit such radical groups into the process would create chaos and stymie any progress toward co-operation.

It is unrealistic for small groups of activists to expect that they will somehow be part of the actual negotiations between states. There are simply some things that are the duty and prerogative of the government. Here, non-governmental organizations can do no more than lobby to make their views known and then trust the government to act in the interests of the public. That sort of trust, however, seems to be in short supply, especially when it comes to the creation of a global order for business.

Our governments have too often squandered such trust in recent times. However, violent street demonstrations like those seen in Seattle do little to encourage transparency and openness. When non-governmental organizations distrust and spurn legitimate channels for participation and opt instead for the more sensational channel of street theatre, democracy is not helped but harmed.

At the same time, if public officials become so entranced by the power of business and technology that they are willing to put decisions regarding our environment and healthcare on the bargaining table in order to attract capital, then perhaps the only forum left for defending certain public interests is the streets.

Dutch, English churches speak out and offer support to farmers

... continued from page 1

thousands of healthy animals are also being destroyed in an attempt to put 'firebreaks' around diseased farms. All other farmers in the infected countries are also affected, not just by the mood but because their flocks and herds cannot be sold or moved. In some areas of the Netherlands farmers cannot even get rid of manure that is piling up.

Relief fund for farmers

Churches across England are contributing to a relief fund for farmers and farm workers, but the future of farmers will likely be affected for many months, if not years. March 25 was set aside as a special day of prayer and help for farmers. The British government does pay farmers for the loss of slaughtered animals, but it cannot begin to pay for losses suffered by those who cannot sell their products or for the losses in tourism to the countryside.

Deborah Jones of the Catholic Study Circle of Animal Welfare said that animal welfare was being sacrificed to economics. Animals could be inexpensively inoculated against foot and mouth disease, she pointed out, but this had been avoided so that the country could claim a clean bill of health for exports. In the Netherlands, deputies of the Reformed Congregations have complained that the radical measures taken to contain the disease – the slaughter of thousands of healthy animals – has been motivated by the market. They urged that such measures should be guided not by economic interests but by the awareness that we are called by God to keep and develop his creation.

Only topic of conversation

On the streets in the farming towns the epidemic is the only topic of conversation. Everyone feels affected, weighed down.

One Dutch farmer describes how he shuddered with fear when he heard that the disease had been discovered in a nearby farm. He knows the man well, but he cannot go over and visit or help because he is afraid of contamination. This is happening in all affected areas; farmers are isolating themselves.

Even though the infection is several kilometres away, says one farmer, he enters his barns with dread every morning, almost afraid to inspect his animals for symptoms. "It's such an incomprehensible disease," he says. No one knows how the outbreak started in the Netherlands, but it seems to be an unusually virulent strain. Farmers have been told that the wind may carry the virus many kilometres. They seal off their farms and use powerful chemicals on footwear and vehicles, but how do you protect against the wind? Even if they find no symptoms, the authorities may come knocking at their door if it strikes nearby.

"I've got a herd of milk cows," says a dairy farmer not far from the site of the first outbreak. "You form a close bond with them. You know each one through and through. After all, you're caring for them 365 days a year and you milk them twice a day. But if your neighbor's goat shows any symptoms, an hour and a half from now they'll all be dead..."

Years to build up a herd

Another muses: "It takes years, decades to build up a herd. You can't replace them overnight." Dutch dairy farmers are pouring thousands of litres of milk down the drain. It's not an easy thing to do. "It fills your heart with pain."

J. Kluin, whose neighbor's farm has been stricken, asks, "What can you say? You can only give comfort from God's Word." He alludes to Habakkuk 3, which speaks of God coming in wrath and mercy:

Plague went before him;
pestilence followed his steps.
He stood, and shook the earth;
he looked, and made the nations tremble.

Kluin talked about recent advances in biotechnology and man's "idea that he can make and control everything." He pauses. "But the Lord blows into it." Then he ends with another allusion to Habakkuk:

Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will be joyful in God my Savior.
The Sovereign Lord is my strength;
he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,
he enables me to go on the heights.

News/Politics

Fair Vote Canada calls for new voting system

Alan Doerksen

OTTAWA — Fair Vote Canada (FVC), a group committed to electoral reform in Canada and championing proportional representation as an alternative, held its first national meeting in Ottawa at the end of March. Featured at the meetings were such speakers as Nick Loenen, author of *Citizenship and Democracy* and longtime supporter of proportional representation, NDP MP Lorne Nystrom, and Liberal MP Dan McTeague. Keynote speaker was the Right Honorable James Bolger, former Prime Minister of New Zealand, a country which adopted proportional representation in 1993.

Doug Bailie, a member of FVC's planning council, says the conference was planned with two broad aims: "One [was] to bring together commentators to discuss electoral reform [and] to provide encouragement and enlightenment." The other purpose was to get FVC further organized, and to "deal with the nuts and bolts of the operation."

Campaign for electoral reform

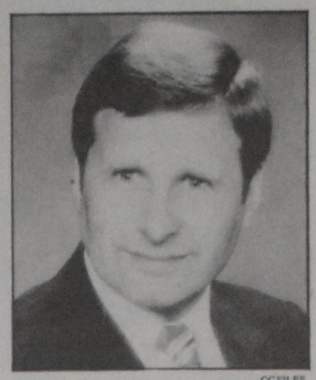
FVC was started August 1, 2000. Its focus, according to its website, is "to provide concerned citizens, community leaders and activists with an organizational framework to build a nationwide grassroots and electoral reform campaign in Canada." The organization will focus on educating Canadians about the strengths and weaknesses of different systems. Their ultimate objective is to gain the support of all parties for a national referendum on voting systems.

The FVC website features a paper discussing their strategy and key ideas. New Zealand is featured as "the most impressive and relevant example" of a country which has adopted proportional representation. "Like Canada, New Zealand is a former British colony which unquestioningly adopted the British electoral system upon independence," states the paper. "In 1993, following nine years of study, civic education and public debate, New Zealanders voted to replace their 'first-past-the-post' system, which had been in place for more than 100 years, with a proportional representation system."

Wasted votes

"Making every vote count" is an FVC slogan. Bailie believes a vote for a party should have equal weight in all parts of Canada, but such is not the case currently. One main problem with the current system is that it prompts voters to vote strategically, he says. Instead of voting for one's favorite candidate or party, people end up "voting against something." Some Canadians worry that voting for their favorite candidate could mean wasting their vote.

Bailie sees proportional representation as a better alternative, but believes this should work on a province-by-province level. For example, when Canadians vote in a federal election, if 25 per cent of Ontarians vote NDP, 25 per cent of Ontario's seats in Parliament should also go to the NDP.



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Nick Loenen

Nick Loenen, who is connected with Fair Vote B.C. as well as FVC, outlines for *Christian Courier* what he feels are the main problems with Canada's electoral system:

"Our present voting system is undemocratic because:

• The majority of voters do not get the candidate they vote for. Such votes are wasted in that they

See **FVC** *page 8...*

Democratic conflict in Middle East

Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

It has been nearly six years since my wife and I visited the Middle East, including Israel and the occupied territories. In retrospect it seems that the summer of 1995 was an uncharacteristic period of relative peace in an otherwise turbulent recent history. Under its then prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, Israel had recently concluded the historic Oslo Agreement with the Palestinians, and the newly created Palestinian Authority was already administering Gaza and Jericho. Moreover, Israel had also made peace with King Hussein's Jordan, enabling us to travel through the recently opened border between these two countries. Optimism was in the air, and many thought a peace agreement with Syria could be the next step.

Notoriously fragile peace agreements

However, Middle East peace agreements are notoriously fragile, easily derailed by as little as a single act of terrorism. Even where the majority are war weary and increasingly willing to make the hard choices necessary for lasting peace, there will always be extremist elements with an interest in maintaining hostilities. In this respect, the Middle East conflict is the most democratic of conflicts, in which, given the impossibility of absolute unanimity, everyone has a veto over a future peace agreement, to be exercised at the point of a gun.

Of course, the momentum for peace was halted by Rabin's tragic assassination in November 1995. His successors, Shimon Peres, Benyamin Netanyahu and Ehud Barak, kept the peace process moving with varying levels of commitment. Netanyahu, leading the hardline Likud bloc in the Knesset, Israel's parliament, was reticent to make further concessions to the Palestinians. Peres and Barak, with their Labour Party backing, were more willing to do so. However, by the beginning of this year Barak had proved to be a less than competent political leader, and a public backlash at the polls brought General Ariel Sharon to power.

Sharon is a military man who fought in every Arab-Israeli war, from 1948 through 1973. He was a strategist during the Six-Day War of 1967, in which Israel successfully captured territory from Egypt, Jordan and Syria. Six years later, during the October 1973 War, he led a battalion across the Suez Canal into the heart of Egyptian territory. Shortly thereafter he was elected to the Knesset, eventually serving as Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Defence in Menachem Begin's cabinet.

It was during his tenure in the latter position that Israel launched its invasion of Lebanon in 1982. In September of that year members of the Israeli-backed Phalangist militia entered two Palestinian refugee camps, Sabra and Shatilla, and massacred their residents, possibly as many as 2,000. As Defence Minister, Sharon was held culpable by Israel's Kahan Commission for at least doing nothing to stop the massacre. In the nearly two decades since that grisly incident most Arabs have come to consider Sharon a war criminal.

A vote against peace process

It is a mark of the frustration Israelis felt over Barak that they would willingly bring someone with Sharon's reputation to the premier's office. Unfortunately a vote against Barak inevitably translates into a vote against the peace process itself, which can only exacerbate the tensions in the region.

Sharon himself claims to favor peace, but not at the expense of security for Jews in their "one and only land." Yet if his words are to become anything more than lip service, he will have to acknowledge the validity of Palestinian claims to the "one and only land" of *their* birth, either by incorporating them more fully into the Israeli body politic or, more probably, by recognizing a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario.

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Guest Editorial

Will Quebec Summit promote responsible stewardship and justice for all?

Gerald Vandezande

We've heard and read about it, thought and talked about it. I'm referring to the Third Summit of the Americas which takes place in Quebec City from April 20 to 22. Thirty-four Heads of State from every country in the Americas (except Cuba) will be negotiating a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), an agreement that extends NAFTA's free market model throughout the hemisphere.

Recently, an Evangelical Lutheran Church leader sent an announcement to assist church networks and faith communities across Canada in their reflection and action around this Quebec Summit. My Lutheran friend is an active member of the Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice (ECEJ).

'Say Yes!'

This coalition invites churches across Canada to join a chorus of voices throughout the Americas calling for a new economic vision. "Say YES! to an Agenda for the Americas that puts people before profits." ECEJ urges us (1) to pray for the people of the Americas and their leaders at this historic moment and (2) send a message to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, host of the Quebec Summit, and register our concerns about the economic model that the FTAA promotes.

ECEJ points out that our faith tradition calls us to care for our neighbor and the earth. "We believe the test of any economic agreement is the degree to which it enhances the well-being, dignity and essential human rights of all citizens, including the right to adequate nutrition and housing, education, health care, fair and safe working conditions and a healthy environment. An FTAA that does not meet this test must be rejected."

In solidarity with the diverse peoples' movements throughout the hemisphere, ECEJ calls on the leaders at the Quebec Summit to support a Ten Point Agenda for the Americas that:

1. Ensures human rights take precedence over commercial interests.
2. Gives priority to eradicating poverty, generating high quality jobs and economic stability.
3. Protects the environment.
4. Protects human health.
5. Ensures food security.
6. Upholds the right to access essential social services for all citizens as provided for in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
7. Gives special and differential treatment to small and less developed countries.
8. Releases countries from intolerable and unjust debt burdens.
9. Gives governments the right to control their development.
10. Gives citizens broad-based access to the democratic process.

Regrettably, I cannot attend the Second People's Summit of the Americas. Thousands of people from popular movements throughout the Americas are converging on Quebec City. Thousands more will be holding rallies in their own communities. According to press releases, "They will be saying no! to the FTAA, no! to the free market model of growth it embraces and no! to the growing gap between rich and poor it perpetuates."

I would really like to engage in constructive discussions at the Second People's Summit and participate in peaceful expressions of deep concern for the future and well-being of vulnerable people and weak nations. Indeed, these demonstrations of solidarity should call for democratic, fair and sustainable economic alternatives that are environment-friendly. They would be rooted in responsible stewardship by all and socio-economic justice for all.

So, I will be monitoring the Quebec proceedings and events as best I can via the major media, the updates provided by ECEJ and other reliable sources that are concerned with the consistent, integrated practice of economic, social and political justice.

When we really think about it, human life and economics should not consist of concluding trade deals for the sake of maximizing corporate power and profit. Instead, they should be shaped by a comprehensive understanding of the radical meaning of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection that affirms all of life and the whole creation for which Jesus gave his life.

Meanwhile, I will pray for the people of the Americas and their leaders. I have already sent letters to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and certain Cabinet Ministers. I've respectfully urged them to give visionary, wise leadership that will truly serve the common good, the health and the well-being of all people, especially the poor and the powerless.

May God's way of justice, peace and stewardship prevail at the Quebec Summit and throughout the Americas. And may Canada be a beacon of light and hope in a dark and despairing world!

***Gerald Vandezande is the author of* JUSTICE, NOT JUST US Faith Perspectives and National Priorities.**

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EDITORIAL TEAM & PRODUCTION STAFF
Associate Editor: Harry der Nederlanden *ccderned@aol.com*;
Reporter, Layout: Alan Doerksen *ccjournal@aol.com*;
Circulation Manager: Grace Bowman *ccsubscrip@aol.com*;
Accounts Manager: Natasha Postuma *ccadpromo@aol.com*

REGIONAL REPORTERS
Jeff Hoogendoorn, Victoria; Jacky Huberts, Langley, B.C.; James Kwantes, Abbotsford, B.C.; Stephen VanHelden, Calgary; Gordon Legge, Calgary; Jessie Schut, Edmonton; Valerie Walker, Halifax; Robert VanderVennen, Toronto; Margaret Dinsdale, Toronto.

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Tel: (905) 682-8311; 1-800-969-4838
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Ten Point Agenda

1. *Ensures human rights take precedence over commercial interests.* Canada's agreements on labor and environmental protection must take precedence over investors' rights inscribed in trade agreements. Human rights encompass civil and political rights and also social, economic and cultural rights including the right to adequate food, housing, education and health care. Any agreement must ensure that minorities and vulnerable sectors of the population are not excluded.

2. *Gives priority to eradicating poverty*, generating high quality jobs and economic stability. An integration agreement must give priority to genuine poverty eradication. Agreements should foster high quality employment and not phase out secure unionized jobs in favour of insecure contract work.

3. *Protects the environment.* The primacy of commitments made to international environmental treaties must be honored in any new trade agreements. Governments must retain the capacity to regulate corporations so that they do not damage citizens' right to a healthy environment. In particular, any economic integration agreement must not include an investor-state dispute resolution procedure such as that in NAFTA which allows foreign corporations to sue for lost earnings resulting from enforcement of government regulations.

4. *Protects human health.* Citizens' rights under the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights to a standard of living adequate for health and well being, as well as to medical care must not be undermined or violated by any economic integration agreement.

5. *Ensures food security.* Countries should have the right to exclude the production of staple foods from trade agreements. Liberalization of agricultural trade, removal of farm subsidies throughout Latin America and changes to the land tenure system in Mexico have undermined food security and forced millions of people off their land and into urban slums.

6. *Upholds the right to access essential social services* for all citizens as provided for in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Public services such as water, education, health care and housing must be strengthened and not undermined by the intrusion of private service providers. Transnational corporations want to treat public services as an opportunity for foreign investors and foreign service providers.

7. *Gives special and differential treatment to small and less developed countries.* Economic integration agreements must redress the imbalance in negotiating leverage and economic power between large, industrial states and small, developing countries by providing for special and differential treatment for the latter.

8. *Releases countries from intolerable and unjust debt burdens.* In the Americas, annual debt payments exceed new financial inflows creating an immoral drain on poor countries' resources. The illegitimate debts of the developing countries of the Americas must be annulled. These include debts that cannot be serviced without causing harm to people and communities, debt incurred by illegitimate debtors, debts incurred for illegitimate uses and debts incurred with illegitimate terms.

9. *Gives governments the right to control their development.* International financial institutions continue to impose Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) on the poor countries of the Americas. These programs which include trade liberalization, exacerbate inequalities as their austerity measures fall disproportionately on the poor, especially women. SAPs involve an unacceptable intervention in the affairs of sovereign states.

10. *Gives citizens broad-based access to the democratic process.* Citizens must have direct access to the design and implementation of any agreements. Governments must submit economic integration agreements to democratic consultations in each of the countries involved. Citizens of the Americas need to know what is being negotiated so that there can be real public debate on policies that will directly affect all of us. [Edited for length.]

Palestinian Christians need our support

Thank you for the March 5th front page article on the plight of Christian Palestinians and the information it contained. After visiting the Holy Land last fall under the capable leadership of Rev. Klomps, this issue has weighed on my mind because of the close encounter I had with some of its people.

Our tour guide's name was "John" and he was a Christian Palestinian. (So was our bus driver). I think I speak for the whole group I was traveling with when I say that we were very much impressed with John. He helped to make this tour most meaningful to us, explaining every site in the light of Scripture and tying the Old and New Testament beautifully together. The more so because his accounts were not only historically-based but also faith-based. His personal belief in the Lord Jesus Christ shone through all the way.

Can we take this a step further?

But John was very concerned about the future. He sent part of his family to Tel Aviv at one point for safety reasons. The economic situation was also already bad at that time. When we said goodbye at our departure, John asked us to pray for peace. And after having been there, my prayers for peace in the Middle East have increased, but I have wondered also, and your article was a wake-up call, if we should not take this a step further and do something tangible. When I read in the above-mentioned article, "Muslims around the world are supporting Muslims, but Christians aren't supporting Christians," I feel as though we are leaving "John" and other Christian Palestinians to their own devices.

And when I read about Israel receiving billions in Western aid, I remember how John would point out whole new Israeli settlements financed by the United States and would emphasize, with bitterness in his voice, "Built with American dollars!" (I was glad we were Canadians.)

However, that is nothing to be proud of if we don't do anything to help these Palestinian Christians. Their suffering is intensifying. My question is, could your paper publish an address where we could send financial contributions? I am sure there are more people like me who would like to do something to help. If I read the article correctly, support from Canadian churches is non-existent at this time. Maybe your paper could initiate this service. Isn't it time to wake up and reach out?

Thanking you for your attention.

Didy Prinzen
Orono, Ont.

Calvin Institute of Christian Worship gets grant

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — The Calvin Institute of Christian Worship has received a $225,000 grant from the New York-based Henry Luce Foundation (created by Henry R. Luce, the founder and editor-in-chief of TIME magazine).

The grant will make possible three summer faculty seminars in the area of worship and the arts, a stronghold for the Calvin Institute, which each January runs a highly popular Symposium on Worship and the Arts.

CALVIN COLLEGE WEBSITE

John Witvliet

Rigorous liturgical scholarship

Says Institute director John Witvliet: "We can expect to host 30 professors of worship, theology, music, art, preaching and more for a month-long seminar on campus. This program will be designed to promote rigorous and well-grounded liturgical scholarship that will enrich the teaching and practice of Christian worship in seminaries, colleges, universities and congregations."

The seminars in worship and the arts will complement Calvin's already established Summer Seminar Program (which is supported by endowments, Calvin funds and such foundations as The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Templeton Foundation, and Fieldstead and Company).

Calvin staff from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, which is becoming recognized as a national centre of interdisciplinary liturgical research and congregational worship renewal, will support the new seminars, while the day-to-day operations of the new program will be carried out by the office of the Calvin College Seminars in Christian Scholarship, which has 5 years of experience in running similar programs (see **www.calvin.edu/fss**).

At the centre of this program would be an annual four-week summer seminar to enable faculty, primarily from seminaries and independent Christian and church-related colleges and universities, to participate in high-level academic discussions of critical worship-related topics. They would work toward producing first-order scholarship that would be disseminated in published form.

One seminar would be offered in each of the years 2002, 2003, and 2004 on the campuses of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary. The seminar leaders will be senior scholars who are widely recognized as leading authorities in their fields. Ten scholars will be selected to participate in each seminar. This group could also include clergy with an interest in academic discussions of these topics, as well as especially qualified graduate students.

Police, spies necessary in an imperfect world

As a regular contributing columnist, Mr. Bert Hielema certainly has the freedom to comment on news (C.C., March 19). When this is done with a reasonable sense of responsibility, accuracy and fairness, it may well be that his musings serve a purpose. When such attributes are absent, his journalistic product is reduced to irresponsible ridicule and a sham disguised as pseudo-informed commentary.

I am not about to engage in public debate — nor at liberty to do so — in respect to the inaccuracies, misinformation, and disservice to the men and women in western free-world democracies called upon to provide their respective governments with information in a co-operative framework. The majority are dedicated professional people, tasked with gathering raw intelligence, not "fabricating" it. They are much too disciplined to be inclined to "paranoia" and, contrary to Mr. Hielema's thesis, their success or failure are of direct consequence to citizens. They perform this task at home and abroad in what is an imperfect world.

There is no question that there are periodic sensational, national and international disastrous failures in terms of individual culpable and treasonous behavior, and neither the RCMP, CSIS, FBI, CIA, or friendly European counterparts are exempted. The short reason for that is that our imperfect world happens to be inhabited by imperfect people. That, too, is reality.

If Mr. Hielema took the time and trouble, he would discover those involved to be, on the whole, women and men with a well developed sense of morality and ethics, more often than not adhering to personal values which he would recognize, if not precisely rooted in, then at minimum akin to a reformed perspective.

Biblical stories of spies

I have confidence that Mr. Hielema is fully familiar with a biblical account from long ago: "The Lord said to Moses, 'Send men (secret scouts) to spy out the land ' ....Moses sent them to spy out the land...and said to them, 'Go up...yonder...and see what the land is, and whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak [threat assessment], whether they are few or many, and whether the land they dwell in is good or bad, and whether the cities they dwell in are camps or strongholds [military intelligence], and whether the land is rich or poor, and whether there is wood in it or not [economic intelligence]. So they went up and spied out the land '"

This continuing activity Mr. Hielema now infers as inconsequential and fear-mongering by mole-like foxes out for a cheap thrill. Its practitioners, however, are much more inclined to echo the observation by the Preacher: "...It is an unhappy [but necessary] business that God has given the sons of men to be busy with."

I cannot help but wonder how Moses or, for that matter, his successor, the acknowledged military strategist Joshua, would have responded to Mr. Hielema's glib but misguided conclusions.

Supt. Ralph L. De Groot (Rtd), Former Asst. Director,
RCMP Foreign Services Directorate,
Peterborough, Ont.

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Education

'The Contamination Zone'

Jamie Vander Berg

We got two for the price of one this issue. Jamie Vander Berg has been Peter Schuurman's assistant at Brock for the past year under a grant from CRC Home Missions. — Ed.

This past September, I entered "The Contamination Zone." It was orientation week at Brock University; the various student groups had set up promotional booths in front of the Brock tower. As I walked from table to table, introducing myself as Peter's assistant, I crossed the line; I entered "The Contamination Zone."

The lesbian, gay and bisexual club ("lgb") had drawn, with chalk, a clearly defined semicircle on the pavement around their table. It appeared intentional — an attempt at humor, a cultural critique. When I asked about the circle, I was told to observe the steady flow of approaching students. Walking toward us, most would notice the rainbow decor and the club's poster. They would stop abruptly, veer to the side and bypass the table entirely, inadvertently marking out the contours of the chalk semicircle. The person to whom I had addressed my question looked at me, smiled opaquely and said, "Perhaps they thought they might catch something; we are contaminated you know."

An on-going conversation

A dialogue began that day; a simple introduction and an innocent question initiated what has since become an on-going conversation. I have met regularly with the club throughout the academic year, participating in discussions concerning issues of social justice, of spirituality, critiquing various films and enjoying a drink or two with them at the University Club. The initial awkwardness has subsided and the ring on my left hand, for the most part, now goes unnoticed.

Coming out... spiritually

Throughout the dialogue, words have been chosen with care. On December 5th, Campus Ministries and "lgb" co-hosted a panel discussion entitled "Coming Out .. Spiritually." We talked about the interpretation of Scripture, about the church's lack of compassion, about the possibility of reconciliation. The evening was more pastoral than theological, more concerned with persons than with doctrines, more concerned with the working out of our salvation with fear and trembling.

All those in the room that evening were given the opportunity to express themselves, to tell their story, to speak of their spiritual journey, wherever it has led. Most, including myself, were searching, longing for more than just a life of fast-food efficiency, high-speed internet exchange and meaningless existence; most were self-admitted spiritual nomads in search of an oasis, a life-giving spring, disconcerted by the reception they have had in our culture and in our churches.

I will never forget the look on a young woman's face as she recalled her experience in the church. She grew up attending Sunday school; she confirmed her baptism; and, when she came out of the closet, "The church told me that I didn't belong there anymore."

Throughout this year, it has amazed me how seldom I have turned to the stack of synodical documents or doctrinal statements concerning the issue of homosexuality. In meeting with "lgb," I have come to realize that campus ministry, perhaps even ministry at large, is more about compassion than intellectual fervor, more about sojourning than synodical documentation, more about incarnational interaction than disembodied theological argumentation. Which is not to say that one's theology is of little significance. It undergirds all that we do; and yet, it does not, by itself, seem to bridge the gap or draw in the spiritual nomads of our consumer-based, high-tech post-modern culture.

This past September, I entered "The Contamination Zone." I have yet to contract any debilitating disease — or any other ailment, for that matter. The only thing that I have contracted is the trust and respect of a few individuals — a few spiritual nomads, a few friends, in search of the life-giving oasis.

For a quick Letter to the Editor, send e-mail to:
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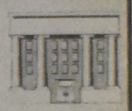


Peter Schuurman

Philosophical (mis)adventures: professors are people too

I've always stood in awe of professors; they were like gods to me in my undergraduate days. They knew books, people, movements, strange and beautiful words — they knew the whole world. The greatest shock I had was when I found myself at a urinal beside one of my professors. I couldn't believe that they did that. Like a human being.

The philosophy department at Brock has a strong religious leaning. I attend, and even collaborate with them in many of the conferences they hold on campus. Through the years, though, I've always wanted to do more than just help with promotion, host a professor, introduce some speakers, etc. I wanted to join the ranks — present a paper myself.

So when I heard that they were having a conference on French theorist Michel Foucault, I offered to be one of the presenters, for I knew a few things about his writings. The organizing professor agreed, and said, "Sure, Peter. Here's the title you can write on." He then handed me the string of words below:

From Greek Aphrodesia to Christian Asceticism to the Beautiful Subject (Beyond Identification with the Sexual to the Organon of Divine Madness)

I was not expecting this. I looked at the words. I read them two more times, and could not, even with the help of spontaneous prayer, make out what the title meant. But, being accustomed to strange languages on the campus, I agreed to do it, assuming I would figure out sometime in the next four months what the words meant.

The sound of one man laughing

Thankfully, one of my informants divulged to me that he assigns titles to everyone. "Don't take it too seriously," she said. So I came up with my own title:

"Foucault's Spirituality: The Sound of One Man Laughing."

Four months later, after a conscientious effort to understand Foucault and my title, I went to the Buffalo airport with the philosophy professor to pick up some of the speakers. I ended up driving three professors to their hotel — an ex-Jesuit priest from Boston, a lesbian from Alabama, and a Jew from Manhattan, now living in South Carolina. I mention only the parts of their identity that they divulged to me in their writing or in our conversation over supper that night at "M.T. Bellies." It was a pleasant evening, although I grew progressively anxious as they talked about the books they've published and the credentials they've accumulated. I was moving in the academic Major Leagues, and I know I only have a little NERF bat to hit with.

Seven papers were presented before mine, all with poetic titles that I did not understand. The one below was especially conducive to vertigo. [It made his head spin. – ed.]

The Mummification of Cold Frogs as Genealogy's Carnavalesque Counter-Memoirs (From the Search for Origins to the Effective History of the Iron Hand of Necessity Shaking the Dice-Box of Chance)

'I don't fit in here'

I was especially handicapped as I am not a philosopher by training. They would mention names that sounded like "Janie", "Guitary", and "De Looze", and I felt like I was at a family reunion where I was the only in-law that showed up. "I don't fit in here," my heart kept repeating.

I was introduced as "the evangelical chaplain," which is partly true. When I gave my paper, I started with a few jokes, hoping that if I couldn't say anything at their depth of learning, I could at least distract them with a few funny stories.

It worked. They went for it. I even had them over to my house for a dinner party after. Although I was worried that philosophers of postmodern thought might get wild, they were quite civilized, and even left the house before 7:30 p.m.

What struck me most was how insecure they all were. The big guy who gave the opening paper asked me, "Was my paper good? Did I have any odd mannerisms as I spoke?"

"No, you were great," I assured him. "I really like your paper. I understood it much more than I did the title."

Looking back now, I see I'm still learning that people are people, and even if you don't speak their language, you can enjoy their company and share a bit of yourselves together. Brilliant, famous people need genuine encouragement as much as the rest of us. And in spite of all the jargon, once in a while a real profound insight is shared, and God's world is a better place for it.

Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed campus chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont.

Arts/Media

The Soul of Sex: ~~Spirituality~~ Academics in the bedroom

Leona Flim

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Get three academics talking seriously in public about sex and it probably isn't surprising if the tone of the occasion is more detached than personal, more cerebral than sexy.

Such was the case at the Christianity and Culture Symposium, held for its 14th season recently at Brock University in St. Catharines. The panel discussion sponsored by the campus ministry of the Christian Reformed Church at Brock was titled The Soul of Sex: Spirituality in the Bedroom.

Although I didn't learn much about the bedroom from the three academics and one woman priest who spoke, I still found the discussion valuable – something I hope will not be overshadowed by my laments. We need more talk about spirituality and sexuality. No two topics are more fascinating, especially in relation to one another.

Desire is wild horse

We in our culture, and we as Christians in particular, so often couch morality as the good guy and desire, especially sexual desire, as the bad. Desire is the wild horse: the crazy-making obsession, the sordid lust, the lure of an affair that shatters a home. Morality is the fence. Morality is the box. If we cling to morals, we will be OK.

But what if such a worldview — or more accurately, such a way of experiencing life – is ultimately impoverishing? What if it is not even what Jesus wants for us (the life-loving, passionate Jesus who turned water into wine)? Is there any way we can be fully and luxuriously sexual while remaining wholesome, passionate about God and pure?

Perhaps the question shouldn't even be necessary, but I suspect it is a common one. This is why a book like Thomas Moore's *The Soul of Sex: Cultivating Life as an Act of Love* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998) is such a joy. Moore doesn't seem to be a Christian (who knows?); yet, he offers some beautifully written and wonderfully enriching reflections on what life, love and sex are all about. The panel discussion used Moore's book as a starting point. I will outline his main concepts here.

Firstly, soul. To Moore, "soul" includes a whole web of things, from our emotions, desires and wishes to our thoughts, fears and fantasies – even our past and cultural milieu (p. xi). At a more technical level, soul to him is the reconciliation of body and spirit. Of course, these words too are layered with complexity. Suffice it to say that the reconciliation of body and spirit is not only welcome, but achingly needed, in his view. According to Moore, we need to rediscover the virtue and value of the erotic body – the body that is diaphanous, richly nuanced, alive; the body that is more than a system of chemicals, pumps and neural pathways. No less importantly (see Chapter 12), we need to celebrate "the erotic life of things" – a good road; a romantic bridge; a sensual house, skyscraper or church. "Soul" is where transcendence and sensuousness meet. "Body and spirit marry in the chapel of the soul" (p. 24).

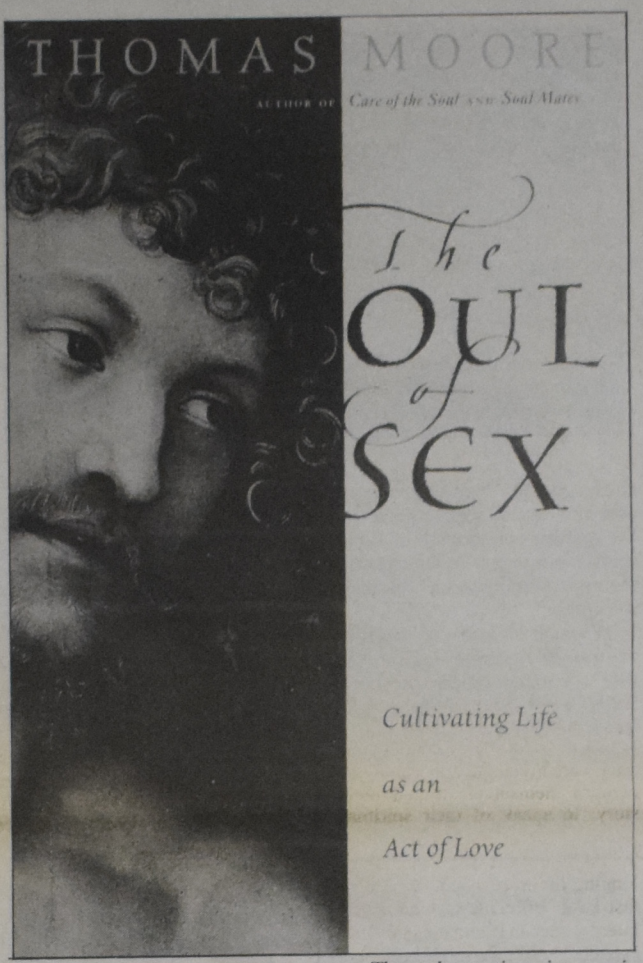
Sex is about almost everything

Which brings us to the other big concept, sex. To Moore, sex is about much more than just sex. In fact, it's about practically everything. Sex to him can be coitus as well as celibacy. It is present in a caress, but can also be present in a gaze, even when the thing seen is not overtly sexual. Perhaps it encompasses what we think of as passion or desire, in the broad sense. Paradoxically, Moore sees sexuality as much in the Aphroditic allure of Marilyn Monroe as in Jesus – "his openness to strangers and friends, the physicality of his healing, the sacramentality in his approach to food, the tolerance he displays in the face of sexual transgression, and his espousal of a philosophy based on love" (p. 72).

You might wonder, given the broad brush strokes, what isn't sex. That would be OK with Moore. His thought culminates in a notion perhaps related to the theme of a previous book, *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*. Here, in *The Soul of Sex*, Moore speaks of the sexualization of daily life. "The perimeters of love-making blur: it's difficult to tell where sex leaves off and an erotic life begins. The qualities of sex become the standards of life, and we can dare to live from love, pleasure and desire" (pp. 299, 300) .

Notion of sex taken too far

Robert Sweetman, philosophy professor at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, said as a panelist that sex is sometimes just sex, for Moore. "But that sex-that-is-just-sex is only a single if crucial component of the sex he wishes to celebrate." Sweetman had reservations about using the word "sex" to refer to the whole of human life and living. "Indeed, his central notion of sex is stretched far beyond its ordinary usage if not beyond all recognition."



Sweetman also had misgivings about Moore's use of the word "soul." In his reading, Moore presents soul as the golden key than unlocks the hidden unity between our culture's fascination with both pornography and mysticism. More 'sex with soul' – living more attuned to the pleasures of sensuousness – becomes the solution for personal and societal problems. Sweetman finds this implausible, doubting that "the healing delights of Epicurean pleasure" can save us.

Echo of biblical idea

Moore could drop the triad of body, soul and spirit, appropriated from his beloved Greco-Roman antiquity, Sweetman said. Yet he heard in Moore's notion of soul "an echo, however dim, of the biblical notion of the heart: that deep unity forged in a covenant of love with our Maker and Redeemer." In a related vein, "if we are redeemed for new life with God and if we find our flourishing in a love for God that encompasses all that we are and have, then surely that includes our sexuality, its drives and its pleasures."

These observations, in my opinion, get to the heart of what makes Moore's book and events like the panel discussion helpful. We need to move beyond the historical and psychological splitting of body and spirit. We need to absorb, in our minds as well as our tissues, that God is pleased when we love, celebrate and even revel in our physical bodies.

Christianity gets a bad rap

We may also need to stop blaming oppressive religious indoctrination for the dualism we are trying to overcome. Panelist Moira McQueen, professor of moral theology at St. Michael's College (part of the Toronto School of Theology), said the split isn't specific to the church or caused by it. In her opinion, it's part of human nature. Christianity in particular gets a bad rap for being anti-sex, she said in a later interview. Christians have sometimes gone down this road but the faith itself teaches that anything created by God is good, she said.

Panelist Nissa Basbaum, Anglican priest at Church of the Transfiguration in St. Catharines, called for greater freedom of sexual expression. Without specifying what kind of activity she had in mind, she said we don't allow much sexual freedom in the church for fear of where it might lead. McQueen said the apostle Paul affirmed sexuality in the context of marriage – for example, in I Corinthians 7:5 where he told spouses not to deprive each other sexually except perhaps by agreement for times of prayer. Basbaum pointed instead to the teachings of Jesus. Unlike Paul, Jesus doesn't tell us what to do, Basbaum said. "He points the way and expects us to make decisions based on spirit, not law."

Joy and pleasure vs. fear and anxiety

Panelist and Brock philosophy professor David Goicoechea asked a series of questions raised by Moore's book. Among them: Can an ordinary erotic life help us to relax the tight grip of reason and allow nature to course throughout our bloodstream and quicken the imagination? Can times of celibacy for anyone be a life theme that reveals unexpected pleasures? Does Jesus show a way of establishing limits that derive from joy and pleasure rather than fear and anxiety? What would an encounter between Marilyn Monroe and Jesus have been like?

The question about limits addresses the issue mentioned at the outset — whether the wild horses of passion and sexual desire will wreak havoc if we let them out of the corral. We may wonder, Moore writes, how we would find necessary limits if we were to stop dividing ourselves between pleasure and principle, if we were to give in to the "profoundly erotic spirit" that can feel like a kind of drunkenness or mystical intoxication (p. 70). Intriguingly, Moore presents Jesus in this context. "The image of Jesus suggests a way of placing limits that derives from joy and pleasure rather than fear and anxiety, limits determined by a positive choice in life. Jesus seems to choose a joyful celibacy and then to tolerate the struggles of others to establish their ways of being sexual and their ways of finding limits" (p.72) .

Later, Moore writes that a life "rooted in moderate attention to the deepening of pleasure and to the honouring of desire" takes more courage than a life of repression. "Its morality lies deeper than the moralism that surrounds us because it is based in an affirmation of life and, being less controlled, is less contaminated by egotism, defensiveness and narcissism" (p. 299).

What exactly this could or

See **SYMPOSIUM** *page 8...*

Ministry focuses on rail, airline workers

Alan Doerksen

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. — Employees of transport industries such as airlines and railways often have few opportunities for spiritual growth, because of the nature of their work. But Christian Transportation Inc. (CTI) is working to encourage spiritual growth among these transport workers.

COURTESY CHRISTIAN TRANSPORTATION INC

Starting with railways

CTI was first started in Toronto in 1930, under the name Railway Missions, explains CTI general director and editor Louis Voyer. "For the first 30 years or so of its existence, the ministry's outreach was primarily directed to railway men in both Canada and the United States," he explains. "Originally in Canada, there were a lot of rural communities largely isolated, accessible only by rail. Many of these places had no Gospel witness at all." At that time, Railway Missions was "a way of bringing the Gospel to these communities....

"But in the 1960s, when the ministry began to branch out to people in other transportation industries — i.e., transit, automotive, airlines, shipping, postal and trucking — it necessitated a name change to CTI." Now, says Voyer, "our ministry ... seeks to encourage or foster the growth of Bible studies and prayer groups among transportation personnel in their workplace."

When he visits the workplaces of transport employees, Voyer tries to seek out fellow Christians among them. This can be a challenge, he admits. "If I go into a railroad yard, I don't know who the Christians are." At some workplaces, "people will say, 'we're all Christians,'" Voyer observes.

"Our purpose is to encourage the Christian already there," he says. He speaks with Christians on the job, once he finds them, and encourages them to share their faith with others.

Voyer often also arranges with managers to leave CTI newsletters in lunchrooms. CTI publishes three newsletters: *TransACTION*, which is meant for transport workers, *Le Transporteur*, a French-language newsletter for transport workers, and *Bulletin*, which is for friends and supporters of CTI.

CTI also provides Bible correspondence courses for interested transport workers, who often request these. These courses are produced by an agency called Emmaus, but CTI staff mark the completed courses. "I don't think we need a Bible study printed especially for transport workers," asserts Voyer.

Spiritual challenges

Transport workers face a variety of spiritual challenges, including the need for fellowship with other Christians, observes Voyer. Because of irregular working hours, many can't regularly attend church services. Bus drivers in Toronto, for instance, have to work for about 15 years before taking Sundays off, says Voyer.

Transport workers spend much time away from home, which "takes a toll on family life."

Some face peer pressure to go out drinking while away from home. Inter-city rail workers sometimes have to rest for 12 to 14 hours in a dorm between train rides, says Voyer. "It's wonderful if they use that time to read the Scriptures and meet other Christians there."

CTI has its head office in Mississauga, Ont., (where Voyer is based) with representatives also working in Winnipeg, and Overland Park, Kansas. The agency works primarily in Canada and the U.S., but also in a few overseas ports.

Symposium on sex was missing something

... continued from page 7

should mean for us as individuals is a question Moore obviously leaves unanswered. To the extent we are won over to his way of thinking, yet unsettled because of what it might mean for sexual boundaries, he would probably say we hadn't gotten his point. Yes, the boundary question is important and as a 30-something single Christian, I wish I were in less turmoil over it. But the deeper issue, Moore would say, is less about behavior, more about richness of experience. Maybe it's enough, at least for now, just to contemplate some richer ways of being in the world.

Aaaah, richness of experience. Not to be idolized, OK. But to be under-estimated, would that be any less tragic? Which brings me back to the symposium and my sense that something was missing there. The erotic art by George Langbroek and Mark Zlomislic added something important but seemed a little lonely on the walls. I wanted some lusty Dr. Ruth-types in the room. I wanted greater frankness of discussion (to be fair, maybe both panel and audience were waiting for each other to take the lead). I was also craving some fortification for the erotic body – refreshments, I mean. Wine? Cheese? Chocolat? But maybe I was expecting too much of a symposium. Maybe that's about where a symposium leaves off and life begins.

Leona Flim is a freelance writer living in St. Catharines, Ontario.

FVC outlines voting system problems

... continued from page 3

do not contribute to the composition of the House of Commons;

- The governing party is given 100 per cent of the political power on substantially less than 50 per cent of the vote;
- The vote of some Canadians counts far more than the vote of other Canadians. This violates the Charter. In the 1993 election it took less than 32,000 votes for each Liberal seat, and over one million votes for each Progressive Conservative seat. In 2000 it took 29,000 Liberal votes in Ontario to get one seat, but it took 525,000 Alliance votes for each seat in Ontario. In a most democracies world-wide, there are no wasted votes and all votes count equally;
- Canada's regions are not represented fairly. From the outcome of the last election it would seem that all Ontarians voted Liberal and most Westerners voted Alliance. Not true. The big wall at the Ontario/Manitoba border which keeps the West from participating in government results from our voting system. It is the system that exacerbates national unity questions. Under a more proportional system it would be less likely that any majority government can be formed without significant representation from the West."

Loenen notes, "I have been involved with Fair Vote Canada, but only as advisor, in the background, primarily because I want to give all my time to the B.C. situation. I believe voting system change will come provincially, either in B.C. or P.E.I., before it comes federally."

Bailie described Loenen's speech as a highlight of the Ottawa conference. Loenen told "how to explain the issue and get people interested," says Bailie. Loenen's speech helped shape the statement of purpose which participants hammered out at the conference. About 75 people participated, "which is about what we were expecting," reports Bailie.

Now that its first national meeting is over, Bailie asserts, "We want to achieve our broad goals." These are to educate the public about their ideas, and to start local chapters of FVC. Local chapters are "the best way to put pressure on politicians to change the system," Bailie contends. "We hope reform will come about through a national referendum." A referendum on this issue is essential because MPs are in a conflict of interest, says Bailie. "People elected under a system have a vested interest in the system."

Bailie is a graduate student working on his PhD in Canadian history at the University of Alberta.

I'm looking forward to meeting my *neighbours.*

For me it's similar to moving into a new neighbourhood. I'm excited about making friends who have the same interests. It's sure to happen in a community of like-minded people with shared experiences and an active outlook on things.

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Zimbabwe church leaders call Mugabe to rule of law

CC Staff (with files from ENI)

So-called "war veterans" in Zimbabwe continue to occupy more and more white farms with the encouragement of their president, Robert Mugabe. On one farm 520 km south of Harare, they have turned a church into their base. Since February, they have occupied 1,700 white-owned farms, despite court rulings against such appropriations.

Judges and journalists who have criticized Mugabe and his followers have been pressured and threatened. One of the country's High Court judges has even taken early retirement.

ALLAN TANNENBAUM/SYGMA

Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe

Calling down a curse

At a funeral for an elderly woman farmer who was murdered by a group of invaders, a Presbyterian minister called down the curse of God upon the murderers and upon the leaders who have encouraged such murders. The 72-year-old Goria Olds was shot in the legs when doing chores. When she tried to crawl back to her truck, the gunmen followed, shot her dogs, and then riddled her body with bullets.

Her son had been killed by more than 70 invaders a year earlier in a gun battle that lasted for five hours.

The pastor, Paul Adrianotos, left Zimbabwe March 11 because the government refused to renew his work permit. Other critics of the regime, like the Catholic Archbishop Pius Ncube, have also been forced to flee the country.

Arrogance and disrespect

Leaders of Mugabe's Zanu party, however, have compared Mugabe (and the minister of employment) to Jesus Christ. A representative of the Catholic Bishops Conference called it blasphemous. "All serious Christians are dismayed at the arrogance of such leaders and their disrespect for the religious feelings of Zimbabwean Christians," he told ENI.

"We expect the leadership of the party to which the politicians belong to stop such scandalous statements once and for all. It just shows that the people responsible are very ignorant, and that they are very vulgar in their thinking."

Refusing to be intimidated

Church leaders in Zimbabwe refuse to be intimidated by Mugabe's lawlessness.

The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) in Zimbabwe has insisted that the government should not interfere with the independence of the judiciary. Tarcicius Zimbiti, CCJP director, said: "We have noted with dismay that pressure is put on Supreme Court judges to resign from their positions for racist reasons. This is unacceptable."

The Baptist Union of Zimbabwe has also issued a plea to the government: "Knowing that we are all accountable to God, who sovereignly put them into power (Roman 13:1-2), the Baptist Union of Zimbabwe calls upon the government to refrain from and oppose all political intimidations, to re-establish the rule of law, uphold the independence of the judiciary, its integrity and impartiality ..."

Many people linked to human rights organizations and the opposition party have accused most of the churches of being unwilling to criticize the government. A recent cartoon in a local daily newspaper portrayed the church licking the government's dirty boots.

Andrew Wutawunashe, a spokesman for the Heads of Denominations in Zimbabwe, which holds regular meetings of church leaders, told ENI: "A judge feels he has to enforce the law, but the law he is to enforce no longer represents the current political system. So the solution lies in changing the constitution.

"As churches we are in the process of arranging a meeting between the government and farmers so that they all get out of the courts."

Early this month, the Zimbabwe Presbytery of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa issued a statement agreeing that Zimbabwe needed land reform, but criticizing "the 'fast-track' program as being implemented by government." The presbytery also urged "the government to publicly affirm and uphold the rule of law in Zimbabwe and cease from its political attack on the Zimbabwean judiciary".

Reflection

Thank God for guilt

Walt Brouwer

Imagine a world without guilt. Suppose you could never feel guilty. You'd never have a twang of conscience, never have a regret, never feel remorseful. You could cheat on your taxes or on your exams and never think twice about it. You could fudge your billings and sleep around and pad your expense account and use your position to walk all over people, and you'd go to bed at night and sleep like a baby.

Some people think all guilt is bad. They say guilt keeps you from empowerment and your potential. They say you ought to make up your own rules as you go along without being bothered by the rules of others.

Sociopaths don't feel guilt

There's a word for people who never feel guilty: sociopaths. If they commit a crime, they are the worst kind of criminal. They are the dangerous because they have no conscience.

At the risk of being labeled a few fries short of a Happy Meal, I say, thank God for guilt. Sometimes you should feel guilty. It is not guilt that messes people up. Unresolved guilt and misplaced guilt messes people up. The Bible says that there are two kinds of guilt: healthy guilt that leads to a changed life without regrets; and unhealthy guilt that leads into a spiral of despair.

So, thank God for guilt, BUT — and notice this is a really big but — God wants you to live without guilt. Living with a load of guilt is not the way you were meant to live.

Guilt is like pain

In a way, guilt is like pain. Though I didn't stop to think of it at the time, I am really grateful that when my boys were born, they were born with a sense of pain. In fact, when one of them caught his fingers in the car door I felt bad he was hurt, but I was glad he felt it, for it enabled us to deal with it immediately. If he never felt the pain, it could have festered into gangrene and caused long-term damage. I am glad my kids feel pain; yet, I do everything possible to protect them from it.

Guilt is like that. Thank God we can experience it; yet, God does everything possible to remove it.

There are good reasons why God wants to free you from guilt. Guilt damages your relationships. When you have cheated someone, it creates a rift — even if the cheated person never knows about it. Somehow guilt destroys your confidence and messes you up.

Guilt also keeps you stuck in your past. It's hard to dream dreams when you are filled with regrets. The Bible says that your sins will find you out. This means that there are no such things as secret sins. Even if no one knows what you've done, your guilt will erode your confidence or wreck your marriage or keep you from seizing the opportunities of the moment.

Guilt always messes you up unless you deal with it. In the Bible, David says, "When I wouldn't admit what a sinner I was, my dishonesty made me miserable and filled my days with frustration." Eugene Petersen translates Jesus' words like this: "Trivialize even the smallest item in God's law and you will only have trivialized yourself. You can't use legal cover to mask a moral failure."

You see, you can't get over regrets simply by changing the rules. It doesn't work.

So where's the good news? Here it is: in the Bible God says, "No matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can remove it. I can make you clean as freshly fallen snow." You see, unless guilt is neurotic, it's not guilt itself that messes us up. It's our refusal to seek the answer for its resolution.

Only through the forgiveness of God in Jesus Christ you can be set free to live the life you were meant to live.

Walt Brouwer is a pastor at Christ Community Christian Reformed Church in Nanaimo, B.C.

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Reality check: what kind of life do we want?

Murray MacAdam

Beneath the blizzard of statistics, Ron Colman's heartfelt plea caught the spirit of what was happening in the Ottawa conference room.

"We should talk about children, not sustainable development," he said matter-of-factly. "This is a very personal endeavor, not just numbers. I have a nine-year-old daughter. What kind of world are we leaving to the next generation of Canadians?"

That sobering question is behind a growing movement to expand our vision of human progress. Currently, we measure progress and well-being largely according to economic indicators. Is the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rising? What about housing starts? But these indicators make no distinction between economic activity that benefits us and what causes harm — by depleting fish stocks recklessly, for example. Nor does the GDP take into account non-economic considerations such as health, leisure time, voluntary involvement, crime rates — the kind of things that count to most Canadians when they ask themselves if their lives are getting better.

Genuine Progress Indicator

Alternative indicators, however, are at last gaining respect and a foothold. All over Canada, citizen groups and thinktanks, such as Ron Colman's GPI Atlantic research group, are using thorough research methods to evaluate well-being in their communities and provinces. [GPI stands for *Genuine Progress Indicator.*]

In fact, so much is going on in this field that 600 people gathered in Ottawa on March 27 to share their knowledge about sustainable development indicator projects in Canada and throughout the world. The conference was sponsored by the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, a federal agency overseeing a three-year project to develop a set of Canadian sustainable development indicators.

The size of the gathering, and the wealth of information shared, made it clear this is a growing movement, with a broad spectrum of Canadians and individuals doing detailed quality-of-life research. "Environmental progress depends in large measure on the quality of information," said federal Environment Minister David Anderson in a keynote speech. "We need new and more innovative ways so we can truly measure progress."

Fascinating and revealing

Across Canada, groups have been involved in fascinating — and revealing — projects to see whether our lives are getting better or not. Economist Mark Anielski of the Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development has taken an in-depth look at life in Alberta through his Alberta GPI Project. Starting with the values of Albertans, it measures 50 indicators of well-being in economic, social and environmental areas including economic growth, debt, poverty, unemployment, crime, air and water quality over 40 years (1961 to 1999). They reveal some striking findings. Alberta's wealth from oil and natural gas is well known, but did you know that Alberta's volunteers and homemakers did $38 billion worth of unpaid work in 1999, equivalent to 35 per cent of Alberta's GDP?

A shaky foundation

From a long-term sustainability perspective, however, Alberta's wealth is built on a shaky foundation. Using the "ecological footprint" model of measuring total environmental impact in terms of energy use and resource depletion, Anielski found that Alberta has the fourth heaviest ecological footprint in the world. "If the world lived like Albertans," said Anielski, "we'd need five more worlds" to provide the resources needed.

Ron Colman outlined equally revealing findings for Nova Scotia, based on GPI Atlantic's work. He zeroed in on forestry as an example of how we need to value "natural capital" like forests, fish, farmland and other natural resources that God has bestowed on us. Forests have value far beyond their timber: they conserve soil from erosion, protect watersheds, provide habitat for wildlife, provide recreation space, attract tourists, and provide a buffer against climate change. Yet, the area of clearcut forests has doubled in Nova Scotia in the past 10 years. Colman's group has documented the harmful effects of current forestry practises, such as the fact that fish stocks in rivers are worsening, leading to less money being spent by anglers.

What difference will all this research make? So far, there seems to be little impact on public policies. While David Anderson voices support for sustainable development, he and his government have been under attack for a weak stance on curbing greenhouse gas emissions. Ron Colman agrees that progress in terms of affecting governmental policy-making is slow. "It's not going to happen overnight. Economic growth is so steeply engrained in the minds of policy-makers," he admits ruefully. Yet Nova Scotia Premier John Hamm has been quoting GPI Atlantic's report that volunteers contribute $1.9 billion worth of services to Nova Scotia. And volunteer groups are using this research on the value of their efforts in their funding applications.

There are signs that the growing body of research on the harmful results of "business as usual," and the benefits of sustainable practices, is helping to bring sustainable development into the policy-making arena. People like Mark Anielski and Ron Colman are talking to their provincial governments about their findings. The highly-respected Canadian Policy Research Network carried out an extensive Quality of Life Indicators project last fall, surveying Canadians from coast to coast, and is now working to publicize their work. As economist and author Hazel Henderson noted, there's a big step ahead, in terms of educating Canadians about genuine progress indicators, and why governments should pay attention to them. "People may not know what GDP means, but they know they want it to grow," noted Henderson. "How do we get new indicators out to the public? How do we fight GDP and housing starts as the measure of progress?" That's the challenge ahead in building support for new measures of well-being.

Murray MacAdam is editor of the **Catalyst,** *the newsletter of Citizens for Public Justice, a national ecumenical public policy organization (www.cpj.ca)*

Tractor show thrills

COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. GLEDDIE

My oldest grandson, Isaiah, 3½, brought me to the annual Spring farm machinery show with all the latest technology on display. I say 'he brought me' because machines are a consuming interest of his. If it weren't for his enthusiasm, I likely would not have gone.

Isaiah sleeps on a John Deere pillow. His room wallpaper has a John Deere border. During meals he leafs through tractor brochures. Of course he owns numerous trucks, tractors and implements.

Imagine, then, how wound up he was by the time I arrived on his doorstep to pick him up for the show. And we were at the gates before the exhibition properly opened.

Farm toys

Being in unfamiliar territory, Isaiah held tightly to my hand until we were well into the first building. We strolled through the cattle pens, and passed by some pick-up trucks and trailers. Then we came upon three booths displaying farm toys – not the kind farmers use, but the type with which little boys play. There were miniatures of every possible farm machine and implement filling tables and banked up on shelves. My little boy dropped my hand and with saucer eyes approached the first booth. In awe he exclaimed over and over, "Oh man, oh, man" — much to the amusement of the grandmotherly-looking lady attending the display.

Back and forth Isaiah paced, from one table to another, not knowing which item to examine first. He eventually settled on a few that he could reach and began touching them, checking out the movement. It made me a bit nervous so I began suggesting we move along to the "really" tractors. He reached for a particularly interesting Fordson tractor with a front-end loader. The owner leaped to snatch it up and place it out of reach. He explained it was a particularly detailed piece and that the price tag was $250.

On we went to the full-size tractors. Big and small we tried them all. Curiously, at first Isaiah made steering wheel turning motions in the air rather than touching the wheel. I suggested he take the wheel. "No, I just pretend", was his emphatic reply. I guessed that since he is familiar with operating tractors, he makes a connection between working the steering wheel and tractor movement. He wasn't about to risk the tractor starting and moving away because he turned the steering wheel.

We tried quads, bobcats, loaders and combines of every color and size. It wasn't long before Isaiah was cranking steering wheels with the best of them.

Through a three-year-old's eyes

There were other attractive features of the show too, such as suckers, popcorn and balloons. There was a particularly absorbing little track on which wind-up toys tooled around dipsy-curved roads. We were there so long that the proprietor eventually helped me woo Isaiah away, "Grandpa says you may come back".

Balloon sculpture was as much fun to watch as to own. Isaiah requested a monkey in a tree. "Self portrait," the sculptor said. Was he referring to himself or his customer?

We were also fortunate in acquiring a helium balloon. To avoid sadness and tears for a lost balloon stuck on the ceiling, I fastened it to Isaiah's zipper tab. Later the string got between his legs causing the balloon to hover over the back of Isaiah's head. He didn't seem to mind. At the United Farmer's booth a smiling grandfatherly-looking man said, "It looks like the young fella is getting a lift from his balloon." "Yes," I shot back, "Just what you and I (old guys) need, a balloon on our britches."

It seemed like a grandpa and grandson out together is enjoyed by everyone and is a ready conversation-starter. We weren't the only such pair there. In fact most of the exchanges of comments were between grandpas: "Turning the farm over to him? That's what I'm doing. I quit." Or: "Now who brought whom to the farm show, I wonder?"

I had thought an hour might do it for the young lad, but before we knew it, three hours had flown by. We returned home, Isaiah to relish what he had seen and done and me refreshed in spirit by seeing the world once again through a three-year- old's eyes.

Vern Gleddie has a sheep ranch near Edmonton, Alta.

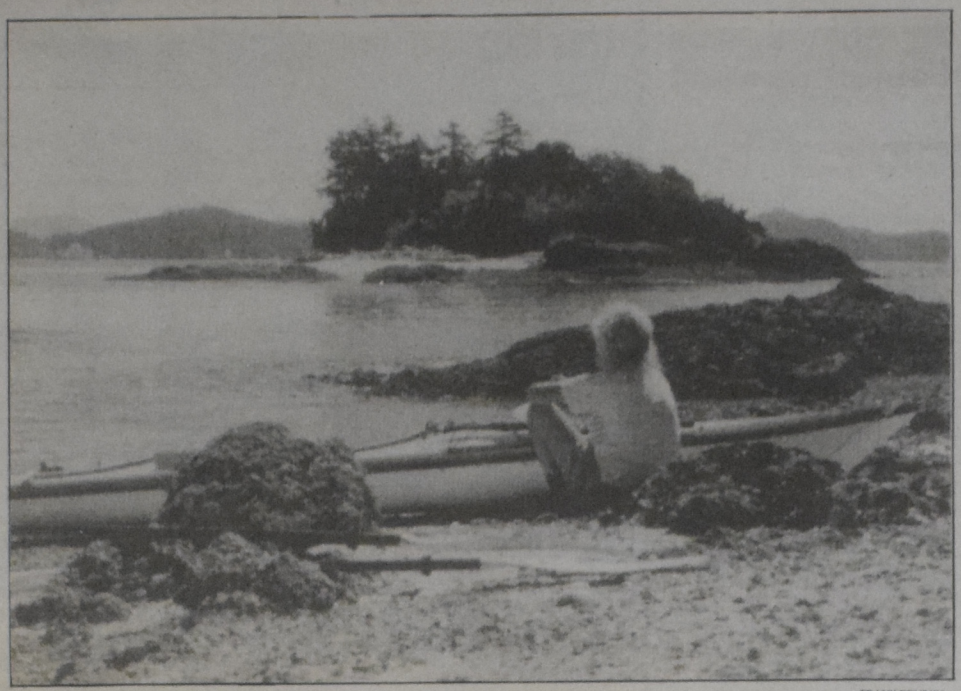
Life

Songs in the night and musical toes

Frank DeVries

Celia, my wife of nearly forty-eight years, has a musical toe. During the time that I have known her, whenever she reads, knits, or does something else while relaxing, she does something that I myself am physically unable to do. When I try to move one toe, all the other toes on my foot come along; I am what you might call footicapped. But Celia has separate control over any one of her toes, and forever the great toe of her left foot goes up and down and up and down to the beat of some unsung song in her head, an unmistakable outward sign of a deep inward sense of joy and contentment.

Throughout her life she either sang or softly whistled all manner of melodies, and every new day was met as a joyful challenge.



FRANK DEVRIES

Celia had always been happy and active. We regularly sea-kayaked, jogged, and played table tennis.

When this fearful thing happened one would have thought her overworked left great toe would come to a well-deserved rest. That did not happen. For even during this period of dark nights a faithful God gave to both of us songs in the night (Job 35:10), and so Celia's toe kept on beating out rhythms to invisible musical happenings. Mind you, it is not that the diagnosis of breast cancer wasn't scary.

Odd sensation of remoteness

In our rollercoaster ride of life we both have experienced deeply felt hurts occasionally imposed upon us all. But this time it was a panic experience unlike any other we'd had before, because this one affected the two of *us*. This was an alien feeling, one of total, utter despair, of ultimate irreversible disaster. Yet at the same time we experienced an odd sensation of distance, of remoteness: this had nothing to do with us, this just could not be happening — not this.

Just a week and a half earlier, thinking she felt something strange, Celia had asked me if I could feel something unusual in her right breast. At the time I could not feel anything out of the ordinary. The following day, however, she asked again. Once again I could not find anything abnormal.

Still, not feeling at ease, she made an appointment with our G.P. He referred her to a specialist, and she got an appointment 10 days hence. Although we fleetingly contemplated the possibility of breast cancer, we weren't too concerned, for at the end of September '98 a mammogram screening had shown that everything was just fine. So how could there be anything wrong the following April?

Little did we know that we were facing the beginning of a dark and extended period of uncertainty and fear.

Celia had always been happy and active. We regularly sea-kayaked, jogged, and played table tennis. Brought up on health food, she forever ate the raw hearts out of every cauliflower and head of lettuce she got her hands on. Moreover, she wasn't only healthy, she was also happy; throughout her life she either sang or softly whistled all manner of melodies, and every new day was met as a joyful challenge to do something she hadn't done before. Sometimes that was a home-made get-well card made with pressed flowers, or trying out a new recipe; arranging new plants in the rockery, or discovering a new author. But when we finally saw the specialist, we were informed that Celia appeared to have a particularly aggressive form of breast cancer: after a confirming biopsy she would have to have a radical mastectomy.

Dangerously ill

My wife, my sweetheart, my best friend, was very and dangerously ill.

The day of the bad news was sunny. Immediately upon arriving home from the doctor's office we sought solace in Celia's favourite place, the garden. There, under the pretext of taking pictures of flowers, I offhandedly asked her to pose with them to make the photographs more interesting, hoping in the meantime that one of the pictures would turn out good enough to be enlarged (one did, and I always carry it in my wallet). I was thinking that this enlargement could then be placed on a small table in front of the sanctuary at the time of the memorial service. Celia told me later that she was fully aware of what I was doing, and why, but never said anything. I felt we had been dealt a death sentence.

Panic-stricken

Later the tumor was identified as a lobular carcinoma (representing about 15 per cent of all types of invasive breast cancers). Within those previous 10 days it had enlarged to an unusual 10 centimetres in diameter, and three weeks after her first sensing of something not being quite right, my girl had surgery.

The operation went well, and subsequent sessions of chemotherapy and radiation were scheduled. Our oncologist informed us that the chemicals he was going to use for chemo were cyclophosphamide and Adriamycin (doxorubicin). The latter drug, he told us, would likely cause Celia's hair to fall out: she was going to be bald. By now panic-stricken I placed an advertisement in this paper, the *Christian Courier*, requesting prayer for her. Many reacted to the ad, assuring me that they would do so indeed.

By this time a nurse/counsellor had advised us to visit the local branch of the Canadian Cancer Society, where good people, mostly volunteers, could give us advice about various kinds of wigs that were made available by the Society, free of charge. This we did. A wig was found that closely matched her hair, and a kind, retired hair stylist even came in to style the wig. However, Celia never did wear it. With it on she felt like somebody taking part in a play. Instead, when her hair was gone, she began to wear attractive kerchiefs and headbands. When her hair began to grow back we returned the wig.

All this happened nearly two years ago, but I can tell you that it was a difficult journey for us both. A few times I woke up in the middle of the night crying, finding my pillow wet, yet not knowing why I had been crying.

Sob session

Still, there were also funny, bizarre moments, like when we went for the wig. At the time we were met by a very kindly lady, Ms. Empathy herself. She was so kind that my girl, up till now incredibly brave, broke down and sobbed, "I'm going to lose my hair." That did it: Ms. Empathy began to cry, too. Two other ladies rushed into the room and joined the fray, so now we have four sobbing women, and before long wet Kleenexes were flying all over the place.

I still break out into tears when I think about Lassie not coming home. So, I figure, I may as well join the happy throng. So said, so done. Now, I myself have been bald since the age of about 30. By now my head is getting very hot, and my glasses steam up, and then I hear this total stranger say, "Hey, nobody ever cried when I got bald!"

Suddenly the crying stops, and through my fogged-up glasses I see four women looking at me. They obviously can't believe that I had said that. Neither can I. And then one of the ladies begins to laugh, and then another, and then we are all laughing and howling so hard that the tears begin to stream all over again, and a new box of Kleenex is hauled into the room, and I became very tired.

Now, after this difficult time, I have my girl back again. Incredibly, even with the chemotherapy, radiation, periods of extreme tiredness, as well as daily injections of Neupogen I had to give her for a time, even during this dark period I couldn't help but notice that Celia's left toe was still always in motion, beating to the music of sundry unsung melodies. I am now convinced she will probably do that until the day she dies. Although she is on long-term medication (Tamoxifen), we once again power-walk, often hand in hand. We kayak, jog, play table tennis and pool, and even slap a ball back and forth on a nearby tennis court.

Seize the day

Still, one thing is different; each new day brings us a new and deeper joy in each other, an increased sense of *carpe diem* (seize the day). Once again, even more than in the past, throughout the day we snicker and chuckle an awful lot, and that is supposed to be good medicine, too. Often we go to bed laughing, and wake up giggling telling each other the crazy dreams we had — we both seem to dream often.

We are thankful to the untold number of people who have prayed for us, and continue to do so today. God has listened to those prayers, answering them with songs he gave us in our hearts even during the darkest nights of the past two years. And so somehow we know, too, that no matter what lies ahead, this same God will continue to sustain us, and guide us, and bring us hope, and that therefore Celia's toe will keep going up and down and up and down ....

Mental health

Why is depression so common in the First World?

An interview with Jean Vanier

ROME (ZENIT.org) — *Depression: Way to Healing*, is the title of Jean Vanier's new book. Vanier, a spiritual master, is the founder of the Faith and Light lay movement, which has 1,500 communities in 72 countries.

The life of this Canadian, who left a brilliant military career to study philosophy and theology, took an unexpected turn in 1964, when he met two mentally handicapped people, whom he removed from their state of neglect in a psychiatric hospital and welcomed into his home.

Vanier founded L'Arche community, with the help of his two new friends. In the community, men and women of different social backgrounds live with handicapped individuals. Since the birth of the first small French community, 103 additional ones have been established throughout the world, embracing 26 countries and more than 2,000 members.

— **Q:** *You are an expert in spirituality, handicaps and ecumenism. Why did you decide to write a book on depression?*

— **Vanier:** I have met too many individuals, Christian and non-Christian, who have lost their self-confidence, and are imprisoned by feelings of sadness and guilt. It is as if they have enormous barriers around themselves. They are men and women who do not really believe that God loves them, when the first thing that Christ says to us is: You are precious, you are valuable, you are important.

— **Q:** *But you are not a psychologist.*

— **Vanier:** Many of the handicapped in our communities manifest the same tendency, not so much of depression, as clinically understood, but of feelings of lack of worth. In fact, when parents have a handicapped child, they are disappointed, and the child feels unwanted. Some of these wounds are normal, inevitable, but the impression is very deep in the subconscious. Later, when they have to face other rejections, the underlying wounds surface again. This is the basis of depression.

The whole pedagogy in L'Arche is to reveal that this is not so: "You are beautiful, we are happy to be with you." Our treatment consists above all in being happy, and being so together, to transform the negative self-image into a positive one. The purpose is to transform the fear of living into a desire to live.

— **Q:** *It is said that depression is the existential evil of our time.*

— **Vanier:** I think it's true because today people feel lost.

— **Q:** *More than in the past?*

— **Vanier:** Before, we had the faith, which gave direction and offered moral guidelines. Today many anchors have been destroyed by the idea that the individual's freedom comes before anything else — except that now we no longer know how to direct this freedom.... Today people want much, but they don't know where to direct their vital energies — hence, their feeling of sadness. Moreover, there is early failure in marriages.

People are aware of the chaos in themselves: violence, banal sexuality, inability to forgive. Men are more aware of the wounds they carry within. Before, living in the domain of morality and will, many people were able to bear difficulties, although their reasons were not always pure. Today confusion prevails.

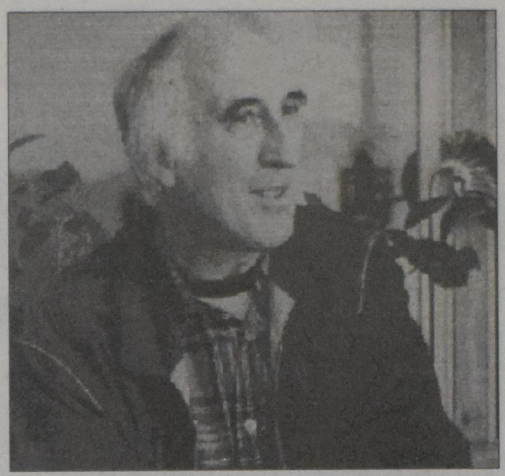
> ***"Today many anchors have been destroyed by the idea that the individual's freedom comes before anything else."***

— **Q:** *Are you saying that depression is the offspring of ideologies: for instance, rationalism, the Enlightenment? Or, perhaps, consumerism?*

— **Vanier:** No, ideologies come in second place. As I don't feel loved, I submerge myself in a political project or even in consumerism.

— **Q:** *But, why is depression typical of the so-called developed world?*

— **Vanier:** Because in the West, people don't know what to do with their leisure. There are no amusements in Africa; one struggles to survive and to eat. All one's energies are in the service of life; and, when one works, there is no depression. Instead, free time is the ambit for family conflicts, and lack of creativity because of television. In this environment, one wonders about the meaning of life.



Jean Vanier, founder of the L'Arche community.

— **Q:** *Do we have too much free time, then?*

— **Vanier:** That's not the problem; rather, we don't know how to use it. The people who know how to exploit it discover the fruitfulness of loving, of caring for the elderly, of being concerned for others.

— **Q:** *Do you think, therefore, that volunteer work is an antidote to depression?*

— **Vanier:** It depends. If it is simply to care for handicapped children or the poor, no. When, on the contrary, it is an encounter with the other, an exchange of love, then it becomes communion and confidence that can heal our wounds.

— **Q:** *Does the world's competitiveness make us more fragile?*

— **Vanier:** Yes, we are much more fragile. Unbridled individualism gives birth to depression. Of course, we must not underrate physical and genetic causes. We still do not know what can be cured with medication and what can be cured with psychology.

However, I always say that three things are necessary, in order to have valid psychotherapy: a good community, a job we like, and faith. On the contrary, today many individuals no longer have a family or friends, or a worthy job, nor the faith that allows them to put reality into perspective. Then, not even the best therapy works.

— **Q:** *However, you say that even Christians, who have the faith, get depressed.*

— **Vanier:** The three elements are necessary simultaneously: All human aspects are related. And by saying this, I do not diminish the importance of medication: I have seen believers who have picked up thanks to Prozac.

— **Q:** *Would you establish an Arche community for those suffering from depression?*

— **Vanier:** No. Instead, centres must be created where these people can meet and talk. Groups must be created, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, in which people with the same problem exchange impressions and understand that they are not alone, that sadness is an illness that can be overcome, that it is not a disgrace.

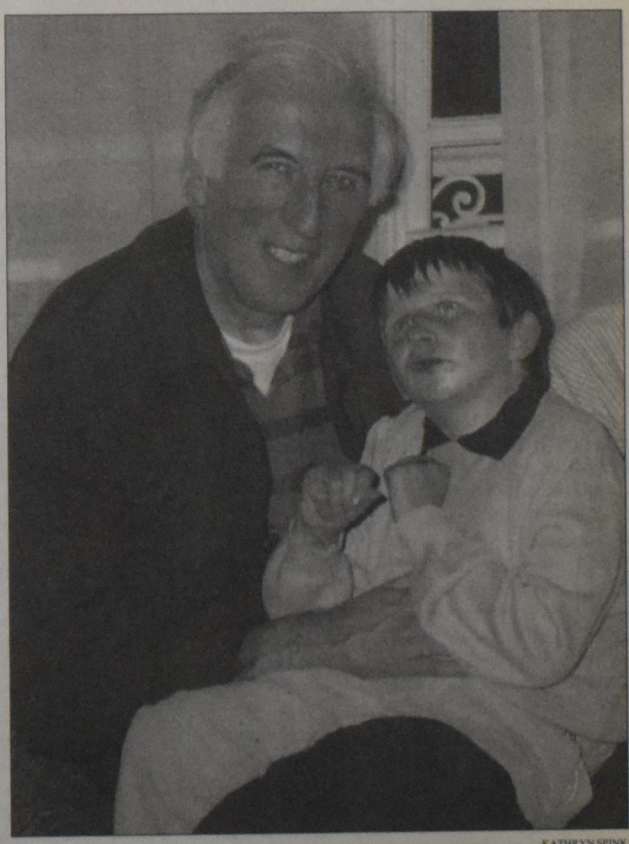
Depression is normal; it often happens between 40 and 55 years of age, the midlife crisis. People must be helped to understand that it is a period of change, that spring can follow winter. There are even well-motivated people, priests and religious, who lose their enthusiasm in midlife.

How can they be helped? A distinction must be made between clinical depression — which needs the attention of a psychiatrist and medication — and a break in life that is accompanied by a sense of sadness. Here, someone who can give advice is needed.

— **Q:** *What can the Church do to help those who are overwhelmed by depression?*

— **Vanier:** There are two aspects to the matter. The first, very painful, is that priests no longer have time to hear confessions. What is necessary is a greater number of priests able to listen to men who have become fragile due to sadness. Confession is not a judgment but a meeting with someone who can listen to another's sufferings and difficulties, not only to console him but to help him understand the meaning of depression.

Second aspect: the Church pushes a lot toward ideals that inspire youth, but at times it forgets those who do not have the strength to take on these commitments. Both the militant and the weak must be [included] in the mystery of the Church. The elderly, mentally ill, people in crisis — they are increasingly more numerous. There is the Church of enthusiasm, but the Church, as refuge of the wounded, is also needed.



KATHRYN SPINK

Easter

Peter's Story

Brian Walsh

Everything that Mary and John have told you is true. But some things were left out.

For example, Mary wasn't there when John and I got to the tomb, so she didn't mention that although John got there ahead of me, he stopped and didn't go in. You know how John is: maybe he sensed that something profound was going on, and you need to take your time to grasp such things.

But you know me. Once I caught up with John, I just barged right in. When I saw that the body was in fact gone, I left and John followed. Maybe that's why we didn't see any angels. Maybe that's why we didn't meet Jesus in the garden; maybe it was because I was just too impetuous and didn't pay attention.

When John was telling you his story, he hinted that our own community had been torn apart by betrayal from within. I guess you all figured he was referring to Judas. And he was.

But Judas wasn't the only one who betrayed Jesus that night.

I also betrayed Jesus.

I denied him three times.

I didn't want them to know that I was one of his followers.

I lied — and said that I didn't know him.

That betrayal weighed heavily on me that first Easter evening. Yes, of course, I shared the joy of the others in seeing the risen Jesus, but my joy was tempered. It was weighed down by guilt.

And whenever I saw him after his resurrection, my betrayal, my guilt, continued to get in the way so I couldn't fully embrace this amazing new reality.

Remember how John put it all together, speaking of a new creation and a new humanity? Well, I was always reminded of the old creation and the old humanity — *my* old humanity, *my* sin.

When Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you," all I could think was that maybe he could send the others, but he could not send me.

Or when he said that we should go out and forgive people's sins and that if we don't forgive those sins, then they are retained — it felt to me like my sins *were* retained, they remained unforgiven.

I don't know if any of you have ever felt that way, but there is something paralyzing about sin that is not dealt with. You can't move on. You feel as if you are somehow stuck.

Rembrandt's The Apostle Peter Denying Christ *(1660).*

So, since I didn't feel I could go out into the world and offer forgiveness to others in the name of the Risen Christ, I went back to what was most comfortable. I went fishing. And I got half of the disciples — even John here — to come with me.

But it seemed as if we weren't any good at fishing anymore; we caught nothing. Up all night with nothing to show for it.

Then just as the sun was starting to light up the morning sky, this guy on the shore shouts out, "Hey! You guys don't have any fish, do you?"

I hate it when people do that.

"No." We replied.

"Why don't you try the other side of the boat?"

What did he think we'd been doing all night? First this side of the boat and then the other side. Back and forth. All night long.

But a fisherman hates to come in with no fish, so we figure, what the heck, let's humor this guy and try it one more time.

At first we thought it was snagged. I was just about to curse the guy on the shore for such a stupid idea when I saw that the net was full — and I mean *full* — of fish.

John clues in immediately and leans over and says to me, "It's the Lord."

So I do what I'm good at.

Without a second thought, I jump overboard and swim to shore, to Jesus, leaving the others to struggle with the bursting nets.

When the others got the fish to shore, we started a fire and had a breakfast barbeque on the beach with Jesus. It was a wonderful meal. My friends teased me about jumping overboard with all my clothes on. We all laughed. Jesus, too.

But there was still that weight on my heart. There was still my betrayal.

Finally, almost as if he could read me like a book, and knew what was on my heart, Jesus spoke directly to me.

"Simon, son of John, do you love me more than the others do?"

If this was his way of delicately bringing up the issue of my betrayal, this was not the way to do it.

It only made matters worse. Instead of talking directly about my denial — my three denials, he brings up my character. Yes, I've been arrogant; I've always assumed that my devotion is greater than the others.

Now, in front of these men I've hurt so often by my rashness and arrogance, he asks me if I love him more than the others do. That's why he uses the word *agape* — to make sure I know what kind of love he's asking about.

Am I really willing to give my all to him, to lay down my life for him? Do I really love him that much?

There's another thing about the question. Maybe you didn't notice, but he called me by my birth name — Simon bar Jonas. He didn't use the name that he had given me — Peter, the Rock.

He didn't call me Peter because there was nothing very solid and rock-like about me during his last hours.

There's no way out. I can't lie to him. That would just be another kind of betrayal. The time for show, for bravado, for pious platitudes, is over. So, weighed down by my guilt, by my betrayal, I answer as honestly as I can.

"Yes, Lord, you know that I have a very deep affection for you."

Jesus had used the word *agape*. But I just couldn't use that word, so I used *phileo*. It means love, but not the kind of love that Jesus was asking about.

And I figure that's it.

Jesus made clear his standards of discipleship: Do you love me? And I assumed that if my answer fell short, the consequence would be clear — I would not be a part of this new humanity that John talked about.

So you can imagine my shock when Jesus responds to my rather weak answer by saying, "Feed my lambs."

"Feed my lambs!" Here the one who called himself the shepherd of the sheep, the risen Lord of the new creation, entrusts to me the responsibility of caring for his flock!

I didn't know what to make of this. I admit I didn't love him the way he had asked, but still, he gives me a role, a ministry in his kingdom.

But before I can figure it out, he asks me again, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

This time he didn't ask me if I loved him more than anyone else. This time he simply asked if I loved him.

I replied with the exact same words I used the first time. What else could I say?

"Yes, Lord, you know that I have a very deep affection for you."

And again, in response to my weak declaration of love, Jesus says, "Tend my sheep."

But then a third time — a third time as if to mirror my own threefold betrayal — he puts the question to me. And again the question changes. This time he doesn't use *agape* but uses the same word I used — *phileo*.

"Simon, son of John, do you have deep affection for me?"

I can't begin to tell you how much that question hurt. With each question, he's asking less of me than the one before. Now it's

Continued on page 14...

Easter

Walking From Jerusalem

this road to Emmaus is crowded
so many people carry
baggage of disillusionment

we had trusted he would
make everything safe
redeem Israel
prevent holocausts

dust hangs on the road
rising doubt
obscures the handwriting on the scrolls
the forgotten love songs
that carried us to Jerusalem

He meets us on the road
his scarred palms in the folds of his garment
questions past history lessons
the foretelling ultrasounds of Jesus
prophecies fulfilled

listen to the love lines again
rewritten on his palm
move closer
read his lips
watch the bread breaking
in the company of witnesses
until your heart burns
to know

burns with trust
even when you cannot see
the bigger picture

Linda Siebenga
Blackfalds, Alta.

Rembrandt's The Risen Christ at Emmaus *(1648).*

Death, thou shalt die

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those, whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure, then from thee much more, must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy, or charms, can make us sleep as well,
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And Death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die.

... John Donne (1573-1631)

Peter's Story

... continued from page 13

almost as if he's saying, "Simon, are you sure that you have any such deep affection for me?"

So I give up. I surrender. "Lord, you know everything," I cry. "You know me inside out. You know me better than I know myself. And you know that I really do have deep affection for you."

And deep affection is enough for Jesus. I confess I'm not some kind of spiritual giant. I sat before him as a spiritual buffoon, a broken man. All I had left was the dignity of being able to answer honestly from the heart. I guess that's all he was looking for — face to face honesty to displace my threefold lie on the night of his arrest.

In response, he assures me that when he said, "As the Father sends me, so I send you," I'm included. I too am sent, with a special calling in his kingdom. And in being sent — warts and all, in all of my brokenness — it became clear to me that I was forgiven.

A story with a happy ending? Well, Jesus never ends things quite where we would expect. Jesus ends our conversation with some rather ominous words:

"Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hand, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go."

Ominous words because they predicted the kind of death Peter would die. He would die on a cross, just like his Lord. He would be arrested and taken places that he did not want to go. All of his youthful arrogance and bravado would be gone by then. But then at last he was able to show that he did indeed love Jesus, who said, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

The last thing Jesus said to Peter was simply, "Follow me." And that is what he did, even when it led to a cross.

Dr. Brian Walsh is Christian Reformed Campus Minister at the University of Toronto and adjunct Professor of Theology at Wycliffe College, Toronto.

Christ's ascension

The counterpart of this withdrawal of Christ [the ascension] from the reach of the senses was the gift to the apostles of the Holy Spirit by whom Christ was made present to them in a new way. They now knew him no more by sight and after the flesh; they had His Spirit. And this "having" is both a real possession and a foretaste, an earnest of what is in store... The Spirit assures us that we are heirs of a kingdom yet to be revealed (Rom. 8:17). The Spirit wars in us against the flesh (Gal. 5:17) and gives us assurance that even our mortal bodies shall be quickened (Rom. 8:11). Meanwhile the very mark of the Spirit's presence is that we groan waiting for our adoption (Rom. 8:23) and hoping for that which we do not yet see (Rom. 8:24,25).

... Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God*

Media/Sports

The Basket, The Patriot win Movieguide Film Awards

ANDREW COOPER

Mel Gibson (right), in the award-winning movie The Patriot.

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (EP) — Films ranging from small independent productions to major blockbuster releases were honored March 21 in the Ninth Annual Movieguide Awards Gala, held at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles.

The Basket, an independent family film about a teacher who uses basketball and opera to help a town learn tolerance, won the "Best Film for Families Award." The Mel Gibson blockbuster *The Patriot*, a saga about the American Revolution, won the award for "Best Film for Mature Audiences."

Return to Me, a romantic story about a heart transplant patient, won the $25,000 Epiphany Prize for "Most Inspirational Movie," and Carroll O'Connor's performance in that film was honored with the Grace Prize for "Most Inspirational Movie Acting."

Bonhoeffer wins

Television productions were honored as well. *The Miracle Maker*, ABC's animated feature about the life of Christ, won the $25,000 Epiphany Prize for "Most Inspirational Television Program." Actor Ulrich Tukur's performance in the PBS production, *Bonhoeffer: Agent of Grace*, as theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer during his battle against the tyranny of Nazi Germany, won the Grace Prize for "Most Inspirational Television Acting."

The awards were presented by Dr. Ted Baehr, executive director of the commission. He praised the film *Mercy Streets* which contains such bold dialogue as, "The great thing about God [is], you don't have to be perfect for Him to accept you, and that's when Jesus comes into the equation." Baehr explained, "David White plays twin brothers — one is a crook and the other is a priest, and the priest tries to save his brother. It's an interesting dialogue on the sovereignty of God."

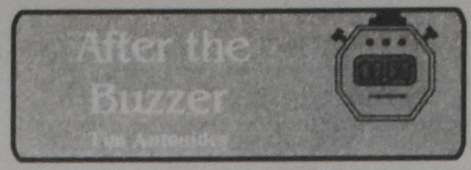
Baehr also had kind words for secular films, including *Remember the Titans*. He said, "Will Patton, playing the white coach, is willing to lay down his life for the black coach and is quite powerful."

Overall, Baehr said 118 films released last year included positive Christian content or a positive worldview. "The interesting thing is that Christian films continue to lead," he insisted. "The more Christian content you do, the better [the movie] does [financially]."

Runners-up in the "Best Film for Families" category were *Chicken Run*, *My Dog Skip*, *The Emperor's New Groove*, and *The Tigger Movie*. Finalists included *Remember the Titans*, Disney's *The Kid*, *Titan A.E.*, and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. Honorable mention for a redemptive film in limited release went to *Mercy Streets*, and honorable mention for documentary went to *Return with Honor*. The film *A Time for Drunken Horses* received special mention for families.

Runners-up in the "Best Film for Mature Audiences" category were *The Family Man*, *U-571*, *George Washington* and *The Legend of Bagger Vance*. Finalists included *Return to Me*, *Rules of Engagement*, *Mission Impossible 2* and *East-West*. The stylish martial arts film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* received special mention in the mature audiences category.

Soup and buns



So here was the dilemma. My Saturday afternoon hockey league team was having a two-game series against a Sunday morning league team. We played the first game and won by one goal. Awesome end-to-end action! I loved it. The talk in the locker room afterwards was about strategy for the next day's game (Sunday). We would change the positions around, play tougher defence, make quick passes. The guys couldn't wait. Here I was, the Christian boy. Raised on the premise that playing organized sports on Sunday was a sacrilege. I needed to make a choice.

Opposite views of the Sabbath

One of the great testaments of the Reformed tradition is our acknowledgement of the sanctity of the Sabbath. It is the Lord's Day — a time to rest and recharge our physical and spiritual batteries. It never ceases to amaze me how much of a difference there is among Christians in their view of Sunday observance. I find it surprising to see so many Christian brothers and sisters who have no problem with working on Sunday. After all, they argue, someone has to. Shopping on Sunday seems to be no big deal anymore, either. The mall is open and people are buying anyway, so what's the problem?

At the opposite end are those who turn the Sabbath into a legalistic ritual. There is a rigid list of activities that are allowed and not allowed on the Seventh Day. Certain types of foods are fine to cook while others are strictly forbidden. Any kind of physical recreation is prohibited. Some come close to the orthodox Jewish practices of allowing only a certain amount of steps or putting timers on the light switches to prevent the laborious turning on and off of lights.

At issue is our desire to be obedient in keeping the Sabbath holy. It's a tough issue. I don't have kids, but I can imagine the frustration that parents have in wanting to honor Sunday but in also wanting to get their kids involved in organized sports, for example. What do you do? To be honest, I'm not satisfied with the finger-wagging, black and white tradition I've been raised in that says you should stay inside, eat soup and buns, and nap all day on Sunday. But I'm also not impressed with the view that Sunday is a day to go to church and then carry on with business as usual.

In the Gospel of Mark, Christ declares that Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. Lord's Day 38 talks about Sunday as a "festive day of rest." It's a time to draw near both to God and to one another as a community. In that I think the core insight lies. The Sabbath is meant to be a time where we rest and draw closer to our God and the church of believers. Is it possible for me to do that in regular church worship and play hockey with a bunch of guys on Sunday? I think it is. Our austere traditions aside, is involvement in organized sports such a perverse distraction from the obedient observance of the Sabbath? I don't have a lot of answers. I've shaken my metaphorical fist at people of other denominations who seem to me to have defiled the Lord's Day. Yet, perhaps I've done so because of a deeply ingrained tradition that's deified the Old Testament Sabbath laws.

It's easy to judge our brothers and sisters about how they spend their Sunday leisure time. It takes more effort to understand God's purposes for the Sabbath and to act accordingly.

Tim Antonides teaches Grade 8 and is a basketball coach at Surrey Christian School in Surrey, B.C.

BBC assailed for portraying Christ as just a 'Social Worker'

LONDON (Zenit.org) — *Son of God*, the BBC's flagship series about Jesus, has been attacked by the leading theologian who acted as a consultant on the project for portraying Christ as "a politically correct social worker," the *Telegraph* reported today.

Canon Tom Wright, the canon theologian of Westminster Abbey, also accuses the BBC program of being historically flawed and potentially offensive to Jews. The canon said the BBC had ignored critical aspects about Christ's life because of fears that the issues would be too "difficult" for viewers, the newspaper said.

'Devastated by omissions'

He said he had been "devastated by the omissions" and that the producers had rejected his pleas to explain Jesus' conviction that God was about to inaugurate a new kingdom on earth. He added that the three-part documentary, which was to end on Easter, "overemphasized political relevance."

Canon Wright, the chairman of the Historical Jesus section of the international Society of Biblical Literature, said: "There was plenty wrong with the wealthy and oppressive aristocracy, but Jesus' movement was far more than another centre-left protest march."

Wright added: "He was saying that God's new day was dawning and that now everything was going to be different. Unfortunately, the BBC didn't want to know about that. Their audience wouldn't understand it, they said. But without it, they won't understand the rest either."

The program stresses Jesus' opposition to the strict purity laws upheld by the wealthy class of chief priests, and his sympathy with the sick and disabled who were pushed to the margins of society. The canon said, however, that it was in danger of making Jesus sound anti-Jewish, "which is historically absurd as well as offensive and dangerous."

The series also tries to challenge assumptions about Jesus' life and death, suggesting, for example, that he may have colluded in his "betrayal" by Judas and that he may have been drugged on the cross to make him appear dead.

The comments from the canon will likely embarrass BBC. Senior executives had hoped that the programs, the most lavish ever produced by its religious broadcasting department, would allay criticism from church figures that it has been trivializing or marginalizing Christianity.

Opinion

The Bible and Women - part 2

Anne VanderHoek

As I mentioned in my last article, I believe that education is vital to the women in office debate. In this second article I focus on how Jesus Christ valued and affirmed women in the Gospel of Luke. Luke provides tremendous encouragement for women. I am pleased to find so many stories about women who, as followers of Jesus, contributed greatly to his ministry.

Passive listeners

While it is true that the Gospel of Luke seems to depict the role of women as that of passive listener, this is because Luke is seeking to make his witness acceptable to the public forum of the empire – to a world of men.

In doing so he "restricts the roles of women to that which is acceptable to the conventions of the imperial world. He blurs traditional and historical traces of women's leadership and exaggerates the leadership of men," says Jane Schaberg in the *Women's Bible Commentary*. We need to read between the lines and understand where Luke is coming from. This implies that there are spaces in the texts and that we have room to reinterpret passages about women in order to make them more meaningful and life-giving to women.

Schaberg writes: "Woman's proper attitude was that of a listener, pondering what is not understood, learning in silence." This can be seen in the story of Mary and Martha. Jesus affirms Mary who is sitting quietly at his feet, listening to his teachings and pondering them. We can reread and reinterpret this text with a more favorable view of Martha. Both Mary and Martha need to be held together to show the two sides to discipleship, the active and the passive.

In the previous chapter Jesus points out that "the one who welcomes me, welcomes the One who sent me (Luke 9:48). To welcome, which can be considered active discipleship, is a good thing. By welcoming Jesus into her home, Martha is doing good. In other passages in Luke, such as the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10), we see active discipleship affirmed. Why, then, is she rebuked by Jesus?

Rebukes for fretting

So we see that Jesus is not rebuking her for her active discipleship, but for her fretting and worrying. If she had not fretted and been so distracted, Jesus most likely would have affirmed her.

The fact that Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet is appropriate, since Jesus is the King, the Anointed One. He is not just any man. Mary's submissiveness and silence is an appropriate stance of a disciple before the Lord. It is probable that Mary also asked questions of Jesus but that Luke, in keeping with conventions of the public forum, did not record them. (I find this story about Mary to be especially affirming to women who want to study theology!).

Another interesting aspect of Luke as it pertains to women, is the pairings of male/female stories. If you read through the gospel, you will notice that this happens over and over again. One good illustration is the parable of the lost sheep paired with the parable of the lost coin. Both of these parables present metaphors for God, one as male and the other as female. It is very affirming to women to read a parable about God as a woman looking for a lost coin parallel to a shepherd looking for his lost sheep. How often have we heard the story of the shepherd looking for the lost sheep compared to the story of the woman looking for her lost coin? Here is an instance where remembering is important.

Balance of faith, action

Another parable that affirms an active woman is the parable of the persistent widow. This parable indicates the appropriate balance of action and faith. Here we have a woman battling for justice against the odds.

It is encouraging for women that Luke mentions women as followers of Jesus. Although he lists them separately from the men, he does list them in Luke 8:1-3 — a positive thing for women. The women mentioned here were helping to support Jesus and his disciples by their own means. This is important for women to note since we are often led to believe that women depended totally on men for everything, including fiances. Here we read about financially independent women.

These women may not have been called disciples or apostles, but they were followers, a term which has the same meaning. It is also probable that these women were present at the Last Supper. The room in which Jesus and his followers met was probably quite large. Most likely there were a number of smaller tables around the centre large table at which the people other than the disciples were sitting. Luke is very clear that there was a bigger group present than the twelve disciples. In Luke 10:1-16 we read that Jesus appointed seventy others and gave them the same instructions as the twelve disciples. After the Last Supper, in Luke 23:49, we read that all the acquaintances of Jesus stood at a distance and they watched. Since women were included among Jesus' followers, we can assume that women were also present and watching. Women were involved and included.

I have tried to show in this article that there is space to move and ways to reinterpret and reframe stories and parables so they are more life-giving for women. It is important to keep in mind that Luke was under much pressure to stay within the social conventions of Roman life when he wrote this gospel. Yet, in reading the Gospel of Luke, I feel affirmed as a woman, especially because there were women followers of Jesus who were very involved in his life. They stayed very close to him throughout his ministry and his death and resurrection.

Anne VanderHoek, a member of Inglewood Christian Reformed Church, is a part-time student at Newman Theological College in Edmonton. She has been working towards a Masters of Divinity degree for the past several years.

Anyone interested in contributing to this column is invited to contact Vicky Van Andel via e-mail at: vanandel@oanet.com

News Comment

Nose for News

Bert Hielema

SOMETHING PECULIAR has crept up on us. While the Canadian parliament endlessly debates whether Jean Chretien has committed a crime in his dealings with Grand Mere Golf course in his home riding of Swaninigan, the deeper question is whether we still live in a democracy. Both the proceedings in the Ottawa House of Commons and especially the upcoming Summit of the Americas in Quebec City have raised this question in my mind. Here's why.

On April 20 the 34 nations of North and South America — not Cuba — will meet in Quebec's capital, with 6000+ Provincial Police and RCMP specially trained to give them total privacy to pursue their policies. A three-metre-high chain link fence, which the locals refer to as the Berlin Wall, has been constructed so that the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) can be conceived without being interrupted by the opponents. That fence is for me a striking symbol that the Americas are divided: on the one side the rich, on the other side the rest of the world, the vast majority. It seems to me that the new golden rule is: Whoever has the gold, rules. The U.S. Presidential party has leased the entire Concorde Hotel, a euphemism for the discord it is creating.

WHO ARE ALLOWED TO enter the gates of that glorious city? Who are the modern Kings of Glory? The Lords with the most, they are the kings of glory. The owners and representatives of the multi-national companies and their paid-for political pals. And they are? One look at the Washington delegation tells all. Paul O'Neill is the top honcho: Treasury Secretary of the U.S.A., and former president of the world's largest aluminum producer, Alcoa. He left with $90 million in company stock. Dick Cheney, vice president, in fact, Prime Minister of the U.S.A., pulled in $20 million as head of a large oil company. G.W. Bush — there for decorum — received $500 million from the various businesses in his presidential campaign.

The $35 million of Canadian taxpayers' money to erect the barrier and pay for policing is proof positive that the current government believes that Business, the Rich, rule the world. It reminds me of the Roman Empire when its Republican Party — even the name is identical — and its wealthy and powerful used their money to elect their chosen candidates to do their bidding. In modern Rome — Washington — as much master of the world as the Roman Empire ever was, the wealthy and powerful backed George W. Bush, prepared to do the rich men's bidding. Witness his refusal to endorse Kyoto: a clear sign that the God of Economic Growth is to be worshipped.

HERE IS WHAT THE *Washington Post* writes about him: "In the past nine days, Bush has renounced his campaign promise to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by power plants, declared Kyoto dead, rescinded a strict new standard for arsenic levels in drinking water, suspended new cleanup requirements for mining companies and threatened to challenge a logging ban on nearly 60 million acres of national forest." An analysis of his pet project of tax reduction revealed that President Bush wants to give most benefits to the rich (Of course: they elected him!), a tip to the middle class and zilch to the poor. It even takes away from the least by cutting deeply into programs for childcare and abused children. Robin Hood in reverse: A 'Hood Robbin' from the poor to give to the rich.

This extreme meanness was also evident when the U.S. Government fired a mapping specialist at the U.S. Geological Survey who posted a map on the Internet showing caribou calving grounds in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, where President Bush hopes to drill for oil: all clear signs of slavish obedience to the Idol of Technology.

All this leaves the U.S.A. with a do-nothing policy on Global Warming, reason why the European Union has written the President, insisting that the U.S. find the "political courage" to finalize the small print of the Kyoto Protocol, and sent Gerhard Schroeder, the German head of State, to Washington to plead with him. All to no avail. The world depends on America, with four per cent of the world's population and causing 25 per cent of the Greenhouse Gases, to show leadership. Now the message is clear: President Bush has kept his ostrich head in the tar sands.

IT IS IN THIS LIGHT THAT we must see the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas. It is disturbingly obvious that the Bush league is determined to favor the U.S. rich at the expense of the poor and the environment, which happens to be God's Creation. Is Chretien any better? No. He too is tied to big capital: his daughter is married to the most powerful business clan (Desmarais and Power Corporation) in La Belle Province. Today everywhere politics puts business at its centre. Let's face it: business has won the war of power. If politicians don't do their bidding, Capital leaves the country. Today the Almighty Dollar is as mobile as the Internet. It shifts around the world with the speed of light, a pure product of greater globalization. If it doesn't like government rules, it leaves.

IN QUEBEC CITY THE FTAA meets to consolidate the rich people's power base. None of the common people — those who have environmental or labor concerns — are allowed within the sacred compound, but businesses can buy their way in and sponsor events. And what does business want to do? They want trade agreements that benefit corporations without ensuring human and environmental health. They want to re-make politics into their own image: an efficient, goal-oriented corporation. Not wide consultation, not trying to harmonize different points of view and so come to a consensus, the way the political parties usually work. No, that is inefficient. What is at stake here is the battle of the unequals: plutocracy versus democracy: the rule of the rich versus the pared down power of the people.

I KNOW THAT DEMOCRACY is not perfect. Churchill hit it right when he said: "Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time." The Romans tried rule by the rich, and used slaves to do the dirty work. It led to the Fall of Rome in 476, which was the beginning of the Dark Ages. If the aim of this Summit of the Americas succeeds in its goals in shaping a world strictly for the rich, in making business bigger and profits greater so that the 500 top corporations in the world can increase the wealth of their shareholders, then it will also herald the start of a new Dark Age. Business wants no restrictions on environmental pollutants, because they affect the immediate profit picture and confesses not to believe in global warming. Ruling politicians have a similar short- range view, because the real effects of increasing greenhouse gases will be felt when they are dead and gone. But the young people and concerned grandparents see it differently. This world must remain inhabitable for all people, not just for the rich who can buy security and have access to the best remedies.

SO A LOT OF FOLK, young and old, are agitating against the FTAA, because they 'sense' that things have become worse since these "trade" deals began. Roads are poorer. Public transportation is a mess. Schools struggle. Health care no longer cares. Homelessness has grown. All despite the idol of "Growth in the Economy."

I don't condone violence. I believe in peaceful actions, such as writing, however inflammatory it may seem, because I have a passionate love for this world and its people. Psalm 137 talks about homesickness in exile, and I can identify with this feeling, because I feel totally alienated from the insidious violence practised, not by the demonstrators — who, when provoked, may throw the odd punch — but by the conference participants who are purposefully attacking God's world and heaping scorn on the poor of the earth and lay waste to the earth and plunder it. (Isaiah 24). I can identify with the cry of the poet of Psalm 137, when he says: "And you, Babylonians — ravagers! A reward to whoever gets back at you for all you've done to us: Yes a reward to the one who grabs your babies and smashes their heads on the rocks!"

I KNOW THAT KIND OF language doesn't fit into the 21st Century: it's the sort of righteous indignation we in our 'civilized' ways have lost. Yet I sincerely believe that the fanatic followers of the God of Economic Growth will not be satisfied until the entire earth has been used up. As long as there is a tiny bit of unspoiled land somewhere with some valuable natural product, the ever-ready economic machine will spot it and use it for those who have the money to pay for it, and never mind the people that live there and may depend on it for their simple existence.

Business today knows no mercy: lay off workers in Toronto or Los Angeles and move your factory to the other side of the world, where labor is cheaper, unions non-existent, regimes are more brutal, environmental regulations ignored, and you are hailed an entrepreneur. But if a poor Chinese or Mexican arrives in Vancouver or San Diego with the intention to work long hours for low pay, they are labeled illegal aliens and rudely deported. Free market for goods, none for people. The FTAA rules will undermine democratic sovereignty, strengthen the hand of the multinationals and the wealthy Western nations and weaken the developing world, forcing them to privatize essential services and forbidding them to reverse these decisions.

And what about us? Where do we stand? We certainly need to pray and work for change.

Bert Hielema meets very Thursday morning at 9 a.m. with 9 other people to pray for these matters also.

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There is a processing fee of $25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged pci, but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original (which we will return) or a downloadable Internet image.

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Birthday

With grateful hearts and thankfulness to the Lord our mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother,

SALLY VISSER

will celebrate her 90th birthday on April 18th. We pray for God's continued blessings in her life.
Please join us in celebrating this special occasion at an Open House Wednesday April 18, 2001 from 2-4 p.m. at The Maranatha Home, 3260 New Street, Unit 106, Burlington, ON L7N 3L4

Personal

Senior/widow in Hamilton interested in meeting female in similar condition with **an interest in occasional vacation excursions.** Please reply in writing indicating your travel interests to **File # 2716, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.** Replies will be treated with confidence.

Thank You

We wish to thank all who have made our fiftieth wedding anniversary a beautiful and unforgettable event.
Thank you for the many tokens of your love and interest!
"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever!"
Rev. Anthony and Jane De Jager
Brampton, Ontario

Birth

DE WEERD:
With thanksgiving to our Lord, Mike & Tracy (nee Scholten) joyfully announce the arrival of a son
Cody John
weighing 7 lbs. 5 oz., born on March 28, 2001, in Palmerston, Ont.
He is a little brother for Kaitlyn. He is a third great-grandchild for Alice Van Gyssel, a fifth great-grandchild for Henry & Lammie Rumph. Another great-grandchild for Karen Scholten and a great-great-grandchild for Lutina Rumph.
Home address: RR 1, Alma ON N0B 1A0

Birthday

With thankfulness to the Lord, we would like to congratulate our father, grandfather, and great-grandfather
JACK WAGENSVELD
We hope to celebrate his 90th birthday, the Lord willing, on Tuesday April 24, 2001.
There will be an Open House in the Fellowship Hall of the Mount Hamilton Christian Reformed Church, Upper Wellington, on his birthday, April 24, from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Best wishes only.
We love you dad, "Grandpa Jack," from your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
Psalm 27:7: "Hear my voice when I call, O Lord; be merciful to me and answer me."
Address: 395 Mohawk Rd. East, Apt. 411, Hamilton ON L8V 4S6

Anniversaries

Sneek, Surhuizum Oakville
Friesland, the Neth. Ontario
With joy and thankfulness to our Lord, we wish to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and Pake and Beppe
JEFF and ATJE CNOSSEN
(nee ZYLSTRA)
Our prayer is that God will keep you in His care and bless you each new day.
Peter & Julie — St. Catharines, Ont.
Ryder, Nathan
Dianne — Burlington, Ont.
Please join us in a celebration of this event at an Open House on Saturday, May 5, 2001, D.V., from 10 a.m. - 12 noon at the Burlington Christian Reformed Church, 3422 New St., Burlington, Ont. Best wishes only!
Home address: 2539 Riversbend Lane, Oakville, ON L6L 1V4

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Anniversaries

Rotterdam, The Netherlands - 1951 April 25 Caledonia, Ontario - 2001

Happy 50th Wedding Anniversary
John (Jan) and Corrie DeGroot

"This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."
Congratulations, Mom and Dad, Grandma and Grandpa, Oma and Opa. It is our prayer that the Lord bless you with many more years of health, love and happiness.
Marilyn & Andy, Caroline & Henry, Trish & Jack, Pauline & Kim and their families, together with their parents, invite you to join them in celebration of this event to an Open House on Saturday, April 28, 2001, D.V., at the Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, 33 King St., York, Ontario. 2 - 4 p.m.
Best wishes only please.

Thank you Mom and Dad for all your love and support throughout the years.

1951 April 12 2001
"So we say with confidence, the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:6)
The Lord has richly blessed our parents and grandparents with 50 years of marriage
CLARENCE and JENNIE DYKSTRA
We thank God for his goodness to them.
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Laura & Brian Rook, Kim, Jamie
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Sheila, Mark, Allan, Sarah
Jim & Maryke Dykstra
Kevin, Steven, David, Ashley, John, Bruce
Anita & Richard Smit
Gerald, Nicholas, Jennifer, Alexander
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Erin, Jack
Home address: 6595 4th Line Rd., Box 400, North Gower, ON K0A 2T0

1951 April 24 2001
Taber, Alta St. Catharines, Ont.
With thankfulness to the Lord, we are happy to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents
GRETA (GRE) and RUDY (ROELOF) KIERS
Congratulations and love from:
John & Roelina Horton — Welland, Ont.
Jennifer and Robin
Chuck & Rose Sider — St. Catharines, Ont.
Kevin & Tammy, Sandra
Al & Grace Kiers — Burlington, Ont.
Jacquelyn, Erin and Michael
We would like to invite family and friends to celebrate with us at an Open House on Saturday, April 28, 2001 from 2 to 4 p.m. at Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, Scott Street, St. Catharines, Ontario. *Best wishes only.*
Home address: 2 White Street, Apt 218, Sunset Homes, St. Catharines ON L2N 1Z2

To advertise in *Christian Courier*, call our toll-free number: 1-800-969-4838.

1956 May 2001
ALBERT and NELLIE VANDERHORST
With joy and thankfulness we hope to celebrate the 45th wedding anniversary of Dad and Mom, Opa and Oma. God has truly blessed and enriched our lives as a result of them.
With all our love:
Liz & Ed Garlick — Kitchener, Ont.
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Diny & Howard Kennedy — Meadowlake, Sask.
Hilary, Lindsay, Tiffany, Aaron
Velma & Jim Connolly — Barrie, Ont.
Kristen, Michael
John & Terry Vanderhorst — Barrie, Ont.
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Arianna, Tyson
Jeanette & Harry Binstock — Barrie, Ont.
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Our parents and staff are in the midst of developing a strategic plan to keep up with the rapidly growing city of Fort McMurray. Please send a covering letter, resume and a statement of faith to:
Joseph A. Champion, Principal
Fort McMurray Christian School
190 Tamarack Way,
Fort McMurray, AB T9K 1A1
Phone: 780-743-1079 (please leave message)
Fax: 780-743-1379
e-mail: fmcss@telusplanet.net

Obituaries

Sappemeer, Gr. Brampton, Ont.
December 18, 1909 - March 13, 2001
"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. Under His wings will he find refuge." (Ps. 91:1,4)
We thank our Heavenly Father for taking home to Himself, so peacefully, our dear husband, dad and Opa
GERKE (GEORGE) KAMPHUIS
age 91, at his home, Faith Manor, Holland Christian Homes, Brampton — formerly of St. Catharines.
He will be missed by his beloved wife of almost 59 years, Gertrude (nee Parlevliet).
His children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren:
John († 1997) & Donna — St. Catharines, Ont.
John & Suzanna, Lisa & Dan Allen, Will & Sarah
Anna & Conrad Van Dijk — Copetown, Ont.
Tracy, Tim, Supriya & Jeremi Paradis, Helena, Sashi & Trish, Kerrie & Timothy, Shanti, Melissa Jepson (foster daughter), Jesse Jepson († March 9, 2001, foster son)
Jane († 1960)
Mary & Roelof Kiers — Hoogeveen, the Neth.
Mark, Leo, Luke
Michelle & John Visser — Belleville, Ont.
David & Bonnie, Kyle, Nathan, Michael & Sharon, Victoria, Deborah, Jonathan
He was predeceased recently by a brother, John, and is survived by his sister Berendien Maathuis, in the Netherlands. As well as several brothers-and sisters-in-law and numerous nieces and nephews.
Correspondence address:
Mrs. G. Kamphuis, Holland Christian Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S, Faith Manor #110, Brampton ON L6Y 5A7

Personal

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Please submit a letter of application with your resume to:
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Att. Mr. John Van Pelt, Principal
475 Keil Drive S., Chatham, ON
N7M 6L8
Phone: 519-352-4980;
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E-mail:
johnvanpelt@chathamchristian.ca

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Mike Kamsteeg,
c/o Christ Community Church,
3897 Holland Ave., Victoria, B.C., V8Z 5K2
Phone: 250-479-3297
or e-mail:
ccchurch@islandnet.com

Springdale Christian Reformed Church is seeking a

YOUTH DIRECTOR

to work together with youth leaders in ministering to teenagers and young adults. Our goal is to develop a relational ministry to equip youth to follow Christ. Please forward resume to:

jdepeuter@on.aibn.com
or fax 905-775-3667

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WHERE: Fellowship C.R.C in Brighton, ON. on the north shore of Lake Ontario (150 km east of Toronto).

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2) To be a Shepherd and to **equip others** to meet the needs of those with spiritual and/or emotional concerns.
3) To lead us in reaching out to the people of Brighton community (pop.8700) in a variety of approaches.

WHEN: When the Holy Spirit is ready to provide us a pastor to lead us forward.

HOW TO REACH US:
Contact the calling committee by:
1) **FAX**: 613-966-1252 (Attn:Stuart Couperus)
2) **E-MAIL**: nancymcgowan@graftonutility.com
3) **WWW**: brightoncrc.org

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or: Joanne Hankinson, secretary;
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A detailed job description is available upon request. For consideration, submit a copy of your resume and a letter stating your interest, by **May 15, 2001**, to:

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- Ability to meet the Ministry's qualifications for Administrator.
- Applicants with a Reformed heritage are encouraged to apply.

Please send your resume and cover letter to:
Vice Chairman of the Board
c/o Mount Nemo Christian Nursing Home
4486 Guelph Line
R.R. #2
Milton, Ontario, L9T 2X6
Fax: 905-335-3699

Send your anniversary, birthday and other important family notices to: *Christian Courier* at fax #: 905-682-8313 or by e-mail to: ccadpromo@aol.com

Classifieds

Teachers

LONDON, ONT.:
Due to a growth in enrolment, expansion of program, and a leave of absence, **London District Christian Secondary School** is in need of approximately **four (4) teachers** for the 2001-2002 school year. We have openings in a variety of areas (**Math, Science, English, Phys. Ed,** etc.) and need teachers who can teach a combination of courses.
We also have a **possible opening** for a **Visual Arts** position.
Interested applicants are asked to submit a letter of application, statement of faith and resume. If you are a secondary education graduate, we ask that you give our needs prayerful consideration. Allow God to lead you to our London District Christian Secondary School community. Contact:

Henry Kooy, Principal
London District Christian Secondary School
24 Braesyde Ave., London, ON
N5W 1V3
e-mail: office@ldcsss.on.ca
Phone: 519-455-4360
Fax: 519-455-4364

REXDALE, ONT.:
Timothy Christian School is a multi cultural, interdenominational school offering quality Christian education to students in the greater Toronto area. Applications for teaching positions are invited for possible openings in:
* **Primary**
* **Junior**
* **Intermediate**

Strengths in Band, Art, P.E. and/or Computer Skills would be an asset.
Please forward applications by March 9 to:

Miss Trudy Jager
Timothy Christian School
28 Elmhurst Dr., Rexdale, ON
M9W 2J5
Phone: 416-741-5770;
fax: 416-741-3359

Langley Christian Schools
LCS, an inter-denominational Christian school system of about 700 students (K-12) is inviting applications for September 2001:

- Special Education
- Primary Teacher
- Computer Teacher (7-12)
- Science -Chemistry (9-12)
- Librarian (7-12)
- Math Teacher (9-11)
- Director of Development and Marketing
- French Teacher (7-9)

Forward inquiries to:
Leo Smit, Superintendent
22702 - 48th Avenue
Langley, BC V2Z 2T6
Phone: 604-533-0839
Fax: 604-533-0842
E-Mail: lmsmit@home.com

LONDON, ONT.:
Faith Community Christian School is seeking the following for the school year, starting September 4, 2001:
* **kindergarten teacher** (3 days)
* **junior teacher** (full time)
* **intermediate teacher** (part time)

All candidates must hold a valid Teacher's Certificate, be able to provide an integrated curriculum from the Ontario Ministry of Education combined with the Christian perspective. The following would be an asset: **a Christian education certificate; music/sports training; special education skills.**
Applications should include their statement of faith, curriculum vitae, educational philosophy, transcripts and names of three references.
Please submit applications to:

Faith Community Christian School
Attn: Joseph Kadlecik, M. Ed., Principal
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SMITHVILLE, ONT.:
Smithville District Christian High is inviting applications for a **full time English** position commencing in September 2001.
We also have **possible positions** in Science, Music, French, and Social Sciences.
Please address all inquiries to:

M. Stroobosscher, Principal
Smithville District Christian High School
6488 Smithville Rd.,
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0
Phone: 905-957-3255;
fax: 905-907-3431
e-mail: sdchoffice@sdch.on.ca

VERNON, B.C.:
Vernon Christian School is a parent-operated school, serving a diverse Christian community in the sunny Okanagan Valley. Recently we have witnessed a substantial growth in enrollment, directly opposite to the decline that other schools in Vernon are experiencing. We are, God willing, looking to add a **Grade 10 program** in the fall of 2002. To that end we will be hiring a **full time teacher in the fall of 2001**. In addition to a teaching assignment he/she will be asked to give leadership in **developing and growing a Grade 10 program** for 2002.
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Send resumes to:

Mr. Larry Simpson, Principal
Vernon Christian School
6890 Pleasant Valley Rd.,
Vernon, BC V1B 3R5
Phone: 250-545-7345
Fax: 250-545-0254
E-mail: vcs@mindlink.bc.ca

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Please send your resume to the attention of the principal:

Mr. A.J. Vanderstoel
Dunnville Christian School
37 Robinson Rd., Dunnville, ON
N1A 2W1
Phone: 905-774-5142;
Fax: 905-774-5519;
E-mail: dcs@linetap.com

TRENTON, ONT.:
Trenton Christian School invites applications from qualified teachers for a maternity leave position for **Senior Kindergarten**. It is 60% for one school year, effective September 1, 2001. There may potentially be other positions available as well. Music is an asset. Please send letter of application, resumes, inquiries, etc. to:

Ike Witteveen, Principal
Trenton Christian School
340 Second Dug Hill Rd., RR 4,
Trenton, ON K8V 5P7
Phone: 613-392-3600;
Fax:613-392-6316;
e-mail: tcs@reach.net

PRINCIPAL
Belleville District Christian School is seeking a dynamic and visionary principal, with limited teaching duties, for the 2001-2002 school year. This individual will provide strong leadership to a staff of 6 under the direction of a committed and unified board.
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Mr. John Koomans
Chairman Principal Search Committee
P.O. Box 543
Stirling, Ontario
K0K 3E0
Tel: 613-395-3105
Fax: 613-395-5721

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CENTENNIAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
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Centennial Christian School invites applications for:
- a French teaching position, which involves teaching French at the Grade 7-12 level
- a Band 6-12 position
- a Primary (Grades 1-3) teaching position
- other possible openings in Kindergarten through Grade 12

Centennial Christian School is located in the beautiful Pacific Northwest area of British Columbia. Centennial Christian School is an inter-denominational school with a teaching staff of 17 and a support staff of 13, and presently offers Christian education to 236 students in Kindergarten - Grade 11. Grade 12 is being added in September 2001.
Please contact the principal or vice principal for further details and send letter of application, resume and other information to:

Centennial Christian School
Curtis Tuininga - Principal
Edgar Veldman - Vice Principal
3608 Sparks Street
Terrace, BC V8G 2V6
Phone: 250-635-6173
Fax: 250-635-9385
E-mail: ccs@telus.net

Timothy Christian School (Rexdale) has a definite opening for

PRINCIPAL

beginning the 2001-2002 school year.

Our school of 200 students and thirteen staff was established in 1958 and is situated in a northwest suburb of Toronto, known as Rexdale. If you are interested in leading a dedicated staff and being supported by a committed Christian school community, we invite you to apply for this position. We look forward to assisting you use your talents and gifts in our school to help prepare God's children for service in His kingdom. Please send resumes (include references), a statement of faith and a brief philosophy of education to:

Principal Search Committee
Att.: Timothy Christian School,
28 Elmhurst Drive, Rexdale, ON M9W 2J5
If you wish to know more about the position please feel free to direct enquiries to:
Mr. William Groot 416-743-2554

OPENINGS AT ABBOTSFORD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
Abbotsford Christian School, a multi-denominational school system serving over 1000 students at 3 campuses, is inviting applications for a number of definite and possible openings:

- **Elementary classroom teachers** (K -7). Expertise in athletics would be an asset
- **Secondary teachers** in **Humanities, CAPP, Bible, Girls P.E., Math, Art**
- **Special Education** teacher or coordinator

For more information contact one of the principals:

Berta den Haan, Principal	Dave Loewen, Principal	Ed Noot, Principal
Heritage Campus (K-7)	Clayburn Hill Campus (K-7)	Seconday Campus
2884 Mission Hwy.	3939 Old Clayburn Rd.	35011 Old Clayburn Rd.
Abbotsford, BC V2S 3Y2	Abbotsford, BC V3G 1J9	Abbotsford, BC V2S 7L7
Ph: 604-850-5342	Ph: 604-850-2694	Ph: 604-850-5342
Fax: 604-859-9995	Fax: 604-850-7075	Fax: 604-859-2240
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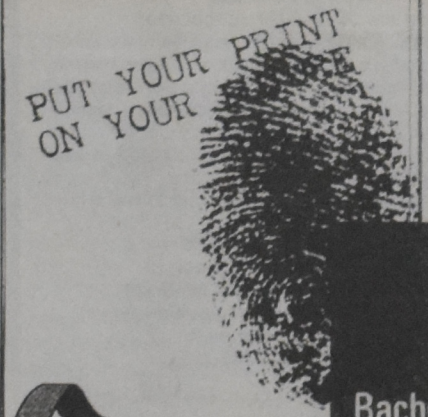

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Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College
498 4th Avenue NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697

Facsimile: 712 722-4496
E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu
Web site: www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaff

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Event

"Shout to the Lord" Worship Conference
Saturday, May 5, 2001
Clarkson CRC,
Mississauga, ON

"Where Is God In Our Worship?"

Dr. John Witvliet, from the Institute of Worship at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan heads a terrific cast of speakers, workshop leaders and worshippers at this conference. Please set this day aside to learn more about striving for excellence in worship. Registration forms and brochures outlining the workshops are available from the church office at

905-823-7262
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www.clarksoncrc.on.ca/worship

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Hamilton - CHAM	7:30 am	820
Kapuskasing - CKAP	7:00 am	580
London - CKSL	7:00 am	1410
Newmarket - CKDX	9:00 am	88.5
Oshawa - CKDO	8:00 am	1350
Owen Sound -CFOS	7:00 am	560
Pembroke - CHVR	10:00 am	96.7
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NewGlasgow -CKEC	7:30 am	1320
Shelburne -- CKBW	7:30 am	93.1
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Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

April 21	40th Anniversary Spring Concert Ont. Music Assembly, Leendert Kooij, Springdale CRC, **Bradford**, Ont. 7:30 p.m. Call 905-775-2230.
April 21	Festival of Praise Concert, 8 Christian Men's Choirs, 330 voices, Living Arts Centre, **Mississauga**, Ont. at 7:30 p.m., presented by the Choraliers Chr. Male Chorus of Brampton.
April 21	"Go Dutch", Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group "De doffer op de dakgoot" 8 p.m, **Jordan,** Ont. in the Christian Heritage School. See ad in Feb.19 issue.
April 21	Spring Concert "O, Sing Unto The Lord", Pro Musica Choir of Burlington, directed by renowned conductor Ian Sadler, featuring Handel's Dettingen Te Deum, guest artist, organist, Elizabeth Harwood; 8 p.m. at Port Nelson United Church, 3132 South Dr., **Burlington,** Ont. Advance tickets: Adults $10; Seniors/Students $8; Family rate (16/under) $30. $2 more at the door. Phone Marj: 905-632-1347.
April 21	Institute for Chr. Studies presents The Evan Runner Chair in the History of Philosophy, Dr. R Sweetman will give an address; 3 p.m. Calvin College Chapel, **Grand Rapids**, Mich. Reception following. See ad.
May 5	"Shout to the Lord", Worship Conference, Clarkson CRC, **Mississauga,** Ont. Call 905-823-7262. See ad.
May 19-20	50th Anniversary Taber CRC, **Taber,** Alta. Call 403-223-8402; e-mail: dvisser@telusplanet.net
May 20	Dutch Service Ancaster CRC, 70 Garner Rd. E, **Ancaster**, Ont. 3 p.m. Rev. John Hellinga preaching.
June 2	Liberation Choir, Grace Anglican Church, 15 Albion Rd., **Brantford**, Ont. For info call 905-457-2348.
June 7-9	Bible and Ministry Conference, **Calvin Theological Seminary.** For info. pverho72@calvin.edu.

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will give an address:
"Of Runners and Batons: Viewing the Marathon of Philosophy from the Cool of the Giant's Shade"

Saturday, April 21, 2001 at 3:00p.m.
Calvin College Chapel
3201 Burton SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546 USA
Reception following

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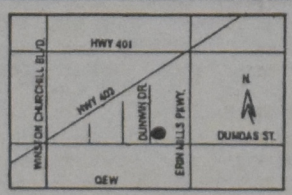


Mississauga, Dundas St. — 2 Blocks W. of Erin Mills Parkway (905) 828-9511

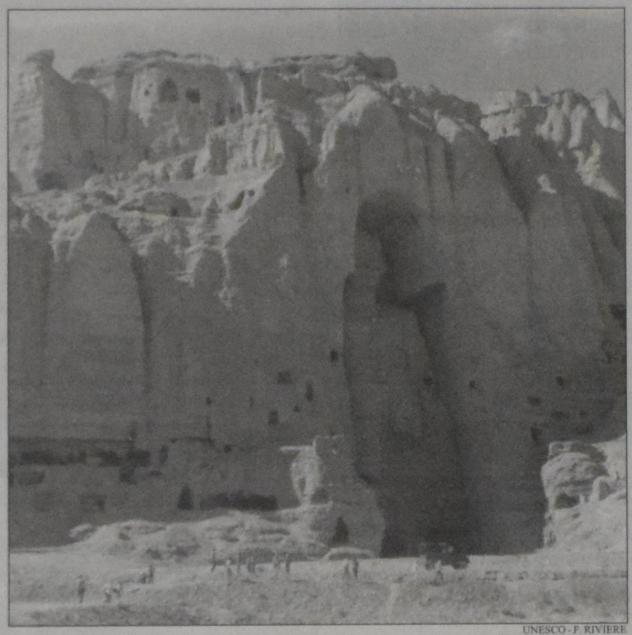
News

Christian archeologist condemns destruction of statues

Alan Doerksen

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — The destruction of centuries-old statues of Buddha by the Taliban regime of Afghanistan recently drew much attention from the outside world.

Many people were outraged when the Taliban's reclusive leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar, ordered the destruction of two huge statues of Buddha in Bamiyan, Afghanistan. Despite earlier assurances that he would protect Afghanistan's rich cultural heritage, Omar ordered the destruction of all statues and drawings of animate objects in February.



UNESCO - F. RIVIERE

One of the statues in Bamiyan, Afghanistan, which have now been destroyed.

Shouting about statues

Faiz Ahmed Faiz, chief of the Foreign Ministry's press department, told the Associated Press the destruction was not intended to offend any religious group. "This decision was not against anyone. It was totally a domestic matter of Afghanistan," said Faiz. "We are very disappointed that the international community doesn't care about the suffering people but they are shouting about the stone statues of Buddha."

The Taliban impose a strict interpretation of Islam over the 95 per cent of Afghanistan they control. Taliban soldiers captured the area in 1997; since then, international organizations have been worried about the fate of the Buddhas. Even Islamic countries — including the Taliban's closest ally, Pakistan — pleaded for the statues to be spared.

"Welcome to the pure Islamic country of Afghanistan. Bamiyan is now clean of the statues and we are proud of it," a Taliban fighter told Reuters, while greeting a team of 16 journalists who were allowed to visit the site.

Sayed Rahmatullah Hashimi, an Afghan foreign ministry official, said Western ambassadors and UNESCO had proposed funding a restoration of the statues at a time when every month 700 Afghan children are dying from drought-related malnutrition. "Nobody cares about our people who are dying for lack of food and water. But everyone cares about these statues," said Hashimi in an interview. According to Religion and Ethics Newsweekly, Hashimi explained the destruction of the statues as a reaction against international sanctions imposed on his people. "If the world is destroying our present and future with economic sanctions, then who gives them the right to talk about our past or to worry about our heritage?"

An act of protest

Burt de Vries, a professor of archeology at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., also sees the destruction of the statues as "an act of protest to the way the world is treating the Taliban," and to the lack of aid from other countries. "One million people are threatened with starvation" in Afghanistan, says De Vries, but the world is largely ignoring that problem. Yet, when two Buddhist statues were threatened with destruction, many people showed indignation.

De Vries specializes in Near East archeology, especially of the late Roman and early Islamic period, and often visits the Palestinian West Bank region (and Jordan). "As an archeologist, I'm extremely upset about all this," he asserts. The statues "have been destroyed — they're gone forever. That's really tragic."

Looking for the reason for the destruction, de Vries says, "I'm not perceiving this as an anti-Buddhist act." Currently, there are no Buddhists in Afghanistan, he says. The statues dated back more than 1500 years to a time when Buddhism was flourishing in the area. "These monuments are on the route Buddhism travelled from India to China," explains de Vries.

"The Taliban is very fundamentalist in a legalistic way," observes de Vries. It practices "very strict iconoclasm" — meaning the government opposes the use of images in religious worship. Although Muslims in general do not use images of people or animals in their mosques, de Vries contends, "Islam has never taken that as a pretext for destroying other images.... This has virtually no precedent. Even the Pakistanis, who are the friendliest with Afghanistan, tried to stop it."

Taliban is an aberration

De Vries observes, "There is a certain amount of general concern of the public that Islam is a threat. Islam and Arabs keep being linked to terrorism." But he says, "I don't think that is especially a characteristic of Islam.... The Taliban is not taken to be representative of Islam. It's an aberration."

"Christians ought to be concerned about the destruction of statues," says de Vries. But more importantly, he says, "Christians need to be concerned about the fact there are a million people with not enough to feed them" in Afghanistan.

De Vries cited instances in history when Christians too destroyed places of worship connected with other religions. "There are plenty of instances in history," he says. In Mexico, for instance, the Conquistadors destroyed a Mixtec temple, which was "instantly replaced by a Catholic cathedral." He adds, "In my specialization, there are instances of destruction of the temple of Apollo in Christian riots" — centuries ago.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has also condemned the destruction of the statues. Ironically, UNESCO had recently offered to finance the restoration of these and other statues in Afghanistan. UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura described it as a "crime against culture."

"It is abominable to witness the cold and calculated destruction of cultural properties which were the heritage of the Afghan people, and, indeed, of the whole of humanity.... This crime against culture was committed while people throughout the world raised their voices to prevent it. The Taliban heeded neither the unprecedented scope of international mobilization, nor the advice against their decision, spontaneously issued by the highest religious authorities of Islam."

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News Digest

Mr. Bean pilots plane

LONDON, England — Rowan Atkinson, the British comic actor best known for his role as the accident-prone Mr. Bean, seized the controls when the pilot of his plane fainted in the sky over Kenya recently. Atkinson, who does not know how to fly, kept the light aircraft carrying his wife and two children on a steady course until the pilot regained consciousness, reports the *Spectator* magazine.

Atkinson had chartered the plane during a family holiday in Kenya in February. He and his family were being flown to Nairobi's airport.

According to the *Spectator*, the plane started to lurch from side to side and the nose dipped violently after the pilot passed out at an altitude of 16,000 feet. Atkinson and his wife reportedly tried to revive the pilot, but without success. In an episode which could have been taken from one of his movies, Atkinson took the controls and kept the plane airborne, until the pilot recovered and landed the aircraft. After reporting the incident, the actor and his family caught a British Airways flight back to London.

Everest climber falls

CHELTENHAM, England — A man who scaled Mount Everest unscathed fell from his attic in March, and broke his toe at his home in Cheltenham, England. Glenn Collins told the *Gloucester Citizen*: "I have got a rather wobbly landing. On the way down from the loft, I fell and cracked my foot. It's a bit embarrassing, really."

Last October, Collins climbed to Mount Everest's base camp to raise money for charity.

Food rage

TALLAHASSEE, Florida — Recently, a man became so enraged when his fish sandwich arrived with tartar sauce instead of ketchup at a fast-food restaurant in Tallahassee, Florida, that he ended up in a high-speed chase with the counter server, reports the *Globe and Mail*. Later, the man went after the server with a machete, saying he would kill him if he did not get a new sandwich.